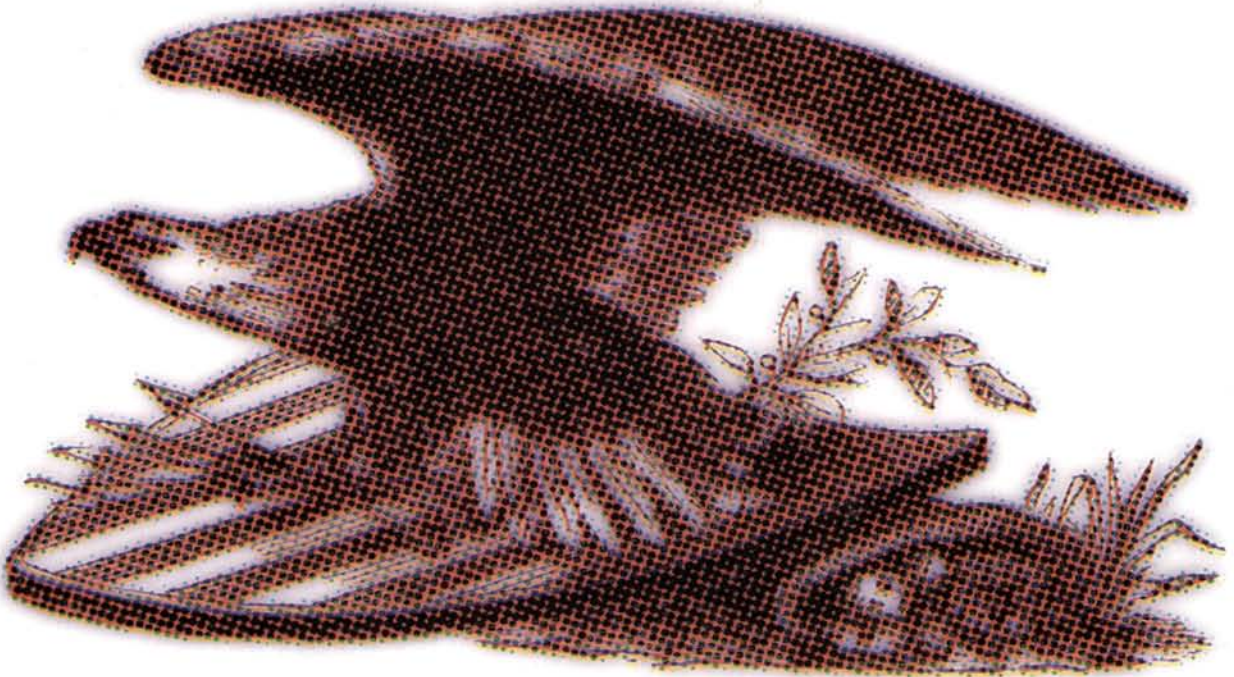


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by JOHN B. JUDIS

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Where We Stand

By Albert Shanker, President
American Federation of Teachers

Warped Priorities

Most Americans probably agree that the government needs to be more careful about the way it spends their money. So when members of Congress propose taking an ax to programs that have already been funded for this fiscal year, they look very tough and very prudent. But I wonder how many people realize exactly what's being done in the name of good management. Some of the proposed cuts, or rescissions as they are called, are downright mean—like the elimination of heating subsidies for poor elderly citizens. Others—like some of the education cuts—will destroy or endanger important long-term goals and should make the American public question the sense of priorities they reflect. In terms of education cuts, I don't know which is more shameful, the 43 percent cut proposed for Goals 2000 or the proposed zeroing-out of the Safe and Drug-Free Schools act. I'll talk about both.

We've been working for a long time to create an education reform that would raise the achievement level of all our students. Goals 2000: Educate America Act, which was signed into law last year, gives us a good shot at doing that. It is not perfect: Like a car in its first model year, Goals 2000 has some bugs that need to be worked out. But it balances two essential elements. One is the idea of challenging national or state standards for what students should know and be able to do—which is an essential ingredient in the successful education systems of other industrial democracies. The other is a recognition of the central role that states and communities must play in deciding *how* to bring the new standards to the classroom.

The cuts that are being called for will cripple important Goals 2000 programs or eliminate them altogether. All funding would be wiped out at the national level. This means, for example, that there would be no money for technical assistance to reforming schools or for the peer review panels, composed of teachers, community members, business people and others, which are designed to evaluate state improvement plans. But since most of the 1995 funding is to flow through the states to school districts, local reform efforts will take the biggest hit. With almost 40 percent of the local-level funding gone, many schools will not get seed money to help them



The cuts that are being called for will cripple important Goals 2000 programs or eliminate them altogether.

in translating the new standards into school improvement plans that make sense for their schools. And even if they are able to manage that with existing funds, they will have no money to help teachers prepare to teach the new and demanding curriculums.

It's popular now to talk about wresting power from the government in Washington and returning it to the hands of the people. But what is the point of gutting an education bill designed to give local people a central role in deciding how they want to change their schools? It seems like some kind of bad joke.

Another bad joke is the proposal to take away all funding from the Safe and Drug-Free Schools act. We know that safe and drug-free schools are a top priority for most Americans. They realize that kids who are frightened cannot learn, and many fear for the safety of their own children. The new law, which reworks existing legislation dealing with drugs alone, proposes a whole range of programs to address the problems of school violence, from peer mediation to extra security personnel and metal detectors. Many schools hesitate to expel dangerous or disruptive students because it doesn't do these youngsters—or their communities—any good to put them out on the street. Safe and Drug-Free Schools would also help solve this problem by offering money to help set up alternative classes for these kids. If the rescissions stand, these programs will be over before they start. Schools will also face big cutbacks in their drug programs, most of which depend heavily on federal money. In New York City alone, these programs will lose a quarter of their funding.

The proposal to cut \$1.7 billion from the federal education budget this year raises serious questions about the priorities of the people who are pushing it. Do they think it is more important to finance a capital gains tax cut for the wealthiest Americans or build more weapons systems than to help create safe and high-achieving schools? If so, I believe most Americans would agree that they've gone far beyond whatever mandate they had. At this writing, the cuts are still under discussion and maybe our elected representatives in Washington can be persuaded to think again. It's up to the people who care about education and safe schools to speak their minds.

Mr. Shanker's comments appear in this ad under the auspices of the American Federation of Teachers. Reader correspondence is invited. Address your letters to Mr. Shanker at the AFT, 555 New Jersey Avenue, N.W., Washington, D.C. 20001. © 1995 by Albert Shanker.



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Article on page 19.

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- 4 **CORRESPONDENCE** Those trendy monks, British I.Q., Nexis journalism &c.
- 6 **MICKEY KAUS** TRB: CLASS IS IN The hot new affirmative action idea.
- 7 **THE EDITORS** LIFT THE BAN "Don't Ask, Don't Tell" has clearly failed. Drop it.
- 8 **NOTEBOOK** Toni Morrison, Ben Nighthorse Campbell, Pat Robertson &c.
- 10 **CHARLES LANE** NATIONAL INSECURITY: WHY SPY? Silly economic espionage.
- 11 **PETER SCHUCK** TORTURED LOGIC The GOP legal onslaught—on torts.
- 12 **JEFFREY ROSEN** SEARCH AND SEIZE The GOP legal onslaught—on evidence.
- 15 **BRUCE BAWER** HOW COOL IS PBS? Not very, on the whole. Our faithful correspondent endures a whole day of PBS-watching and reports back.
- 19 **JOHN B. JUDIS AND MICHAEL LIND** FOR A NEW NATIONALISM In America today, the right and the left are bankrupt. The strongest currents are populism and nationalism. The only question is what kind of populism and what kind of nationalism. A manifesto for a new politics.
- 28 **STANLEY KAUFFMANN** ON FILMS: FARAWAY LIVES Kiwi realism in *Once Were Warriors*; Balkan platitudes in *Before the Rain*.
- 29 **ROBERT ALTER** THE LEVELING WIND *The Tunnel* by William H. Gass
- 32 **JACOB HEILBRUNN** THE OLD BOY AT WAR *Gentleman Spy* by Peter Grose
- 37 **MARC ROBINSON** DON'T CRY FOR ME, ALEXANDRIA *Out of Egypt* by André Aciman
- 39 **ROBERT BOYERS** THE MASTER OF VOICES *Like Most Revelations* by Richard Howard
- 40 **PETER MEINKE** POEM *Noreen*
- 42 **FRED BARNES** WASHINGTON DIARIST: KING NEWT

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CORRESPONDENCE

Second chants

To the editors:

Chant may have qualities of otherness ("The Virtual Sacred," by Katherine Bergeron, February 27), but that alone doesn't explain the C.D.'s popularity.

Its success has to do with the audience and its attitudes of the moment. The C.D.'s marketers understand that most of us don't care about the history, function or significance of chant. Quite the opposite: what we want is pure and untainted ignorance, so that we can project our own fantasies onto the sounds. Otherness is no more than one aspect of the means that delivers us to this end.

Any connection between the phony-baloney mysticism of *Chant* and the genteel exoticism of the Solesmes tradition is incidental at best. Whatever you think of the Solesmes monks and their modern counterparts, it's clear they've made sincere efforts to understand their subject. *Chant*'s only sincere effort is sales.

JOSIAH FISK

Rockport, Massachusetts

To the editors:

Katherine Bergeron's "The Virtual Sacred" is a welcome, well-rounded look at the ersatz nature of New Age disjunction. I object, however, to the "magic of digital enhancement" in describing *Chant*'s "larger than life" presentation. If Bergeron means that the original, analog tapes have had some reverb tacked on, that technique predates digital technology and whatever "magic" it's capable of.

While it's certainly true that the success of *Chant* is out of all proportion to all that precedes it, recordings of Gregorian chant found their audience during the '50s—the same young, collegiate crowd that discovered "progressive jazz" and Gustav Mahler by way of the vinyl disc. Mahler's current popularity traces directly to recording as to nothing else. Blame or credit stereophony.

MIKE SILVERTON

Brooklyn, New York

To the editors:

Katherine Bergeron touched upon the commodification of the "other" and its use in sales promotion. She noted a sticker attached to the Angel C.D. that read, "THE INTERNATIONAL PHENOMENON FROM SPAIN!" and made the humorous aside: "Who could imagine a sticker advertising 'THE INTERNATIONAL PHENOMENON FROM ENGLAND!'" That latter

phrase about England stuck with me until I dusted off some old Beatles I.P.S. The promotional headline atop their first American release on Capitol reads: "THE FIRST ALBUM BY ENGLAND'S PHENOMENAL POP COMBO."

BRYAN GILLIAM

Chapel Hill, North Carolina

Pure Kant

To the editors:

In "Exile and Return" (February 27), Jeffrey Herf writes that Max Horkheimer and Theodor Adorno attempted to evoke the memory of Immanuel Kant and other famous German intellectuals in order to establish "a basis for a return to a decent, or at least to a more decent, society." If Horkheimer and Adorno really believed, as they argued in *The Dialectic of Enlightenment*, that the "instrumental rationality" of the Enlightenment was responsible for the evils of the twentieth century, why would they have so cherished the memory of the German Enlightenment's central figure? The genuine historical fallacy of Horkheimer's and Adorno's thought, as Herf describes it, appears not to be their attempt to shift the burdens of German history onto the "general dilemmas of modernity." Rather, the fallacy lies in their attempt to establish a radical rupture with Germany's past, and an equally profound continuity with it at the same time.

MALICK GHACHEM

Stanford, California

That smarts

To the editors:

Adrian Wooldridge's article ("Bell Curve Liberals," February 27) got me thinking about what a pain I.Q. has been for me as an inner-city junior high teacher. Most of my students could be the kind of "winning people" he says we should be investing in, if only they didn't waste so much effort living down to their low expectations of themselves.

The problem is that so many students, whatever their I.Q. scores, have bought the story that they are somehow inferior and unable to learn. Children and adults can't learn when they think there is something wrong with them the way they already are. I.Q. tests have something to do with this, not because of anything inherently wrong with the tests, but because of the stigma attached to not being "smart."

PAUL CACCIA

Chicago, Illinois

To the editors:

Adrian Wooldridge is correct to point

out that, with respect to I.Q., psychometrists started out with a set of social ideas that went beyond their "science." He identifies a few of the nicer ones for us: smaller classes, less Latin, more nursery schools, less "stiffness" in education. Who could argue with that?

But think about how the I.Q. test has really been used. Think about a smug school system geared to testing rather than teaching, about "scientific" pronouncements about what minority kids can't learn, about young adults who think the highest faculty of mankind is the ability to pick out answers to meaningless questions quickly. I.Q. tests "the best means yet devised for spotting talent wherever it occurs, in the inner cities as well as the plush housing estates"? Tell that to the mother in a public housing complex in Chicago who has just been told her boy is going to be shunted into educable mentally handicapped classes. Another life blasted. But, hey, that's science—liberal science—isn't it?

LORI GRANGER

Chicago, Illinois

Bad prescription

To the editors:

Sally Satel's article "Science by Quota" (February 27) claims that the congressional mandate that the National Institutes of Health develop guidelines ensuring the inclusion of women and minorities in clinical research is flawed. She claims that the group that drafted the legislation lacked "expertise in the field of statistics," resulting in a "federal effort to micromanage science compounded by an affirmative action research plan utterly lacking in scientific merit."

Satel is incorrect on both accounts. The Congressional Caucus for Women's Issues, a highly competent, bipartisan group, which called for the specific inclusion of minorities in NIH-funded clinical research, did so after consulting with experts in the field of research methodology.

The inclusion of women in clinical research is necessary because we know gender differences exist, but so far do not understand why these differences occur. Evidence is accumulating that some genetic traits are not only expressed differently in the two sexes, but are even inherited differently if they come from the mother or from the father. Differences in the developmental pattern, disease expression rates and overall health are found throughout the lives of men and women. Studying differences between genders offers valuable comparative data that permits better understanding.

Everyone is concerned with controlling health care costs. While it may add to the cost of a study to include women and minorities, in the long run it will be more efficient if you have a study population with proper outreach which ensures strength and validity. Recent grant submissions at the NIH have shown an improved quality of research with increased collaboration and creativity, demonstrating that the new guidelines have not proven to be too onerous.

PHYLLIS GREENBERGER
Washington, D.C.

Simpleminded

To the editors:

In "Choice Words" (February 27) about Catholic pro-choice advocate Frances Kissling, Jennifer Bradley argues that "the gaps in her logic" are overlooked by those wishful thinkers "who want to be both good liberals and good Catholics." Bradley concludes that Kissling and her followers simply "can't split the difference" between themselves and Rome.

Bradley's argument that intelligent (if emotional) dissent cannot be reconciled to acceptance of Church authority, especially for religious liberals who don't look like traditional adherents, is simple-minded at best. For millions of liberal religious adherents, the tradition is not a worldview accepted or rejected in toto, but rather a conversation partner for a lifetime.

Bradley reminds me of the dozens of secular Jews I have met who are the quickest to tell me I am not "really" religious since I turn on and off lights on the Sabbath, despite my other observances. Most of the Orthodox Jews I have met see my cup, by contrast, as half-full.

NADAV CAINE
Stanford, California

To the editors:

Jennifer Bradley's "Choice Words" on Frances Kissling of Catholics for a Free Choice missed the boat. There might have been a time when writing about the president of such an organization was an adequate way of dealing with the group.

But those days are over. A piece about the organization should have included a thorough look at its positions, alliances and accomplishments. Such a piece would not necessarily have changed your readers' minds about the basic issues, but it would have provided your readers with more adequate information.

Can you be Catholic and lesbian or gay? Of course, as you know so well.

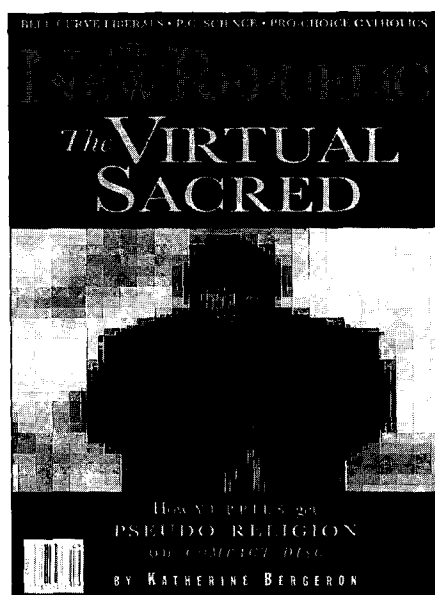
Likewise, one can be Catholic and pro-choice as millions of us are, with or without Rome or THE NEW REPUBLIC.

MARY E. HUNT
Board of directors member,
Catholics for a Free Choice
Silver Spring, Maryland

Incomplete

To the editors:

Gerald Miller of Michigan's Social Services Department asserts that I do not "like" Michigan's welfare reforms and "skew[ed] the facts" in "Compleat Engler" in the February 6 issue ("Correspondence," March 6). Nowhere did I state or imply that I did not "like" Michigan's reforms; I concluded that Michi-



gan had "modest success" and that "at worst, [Michigan's reforms] have been ineffectual or benign."

My article stated that only 23 percent of Michigan's welfare recipients were active in some form in the state's job training and education program last September. Miller writes that I should have used an annual rather than a monthly figure. Annual figures, as Miller knows, are misleading because parents are counted as "participating" who may have been involved for only a few days or a week or two over the course of the year.

Miller says I neglected to mention that 26 percent of Michigan's welfare recipients work part time. That is wrong. I cited the 26 percent figure not once, but twice—and devoted three paragraphs to explaining why the reported rise in part-time work was likely overstated.

DANIEL WHITMAN
Washington, D.C.

Bombs away

To the editors:

In Washington Diarist ("Lazy Days of Winter," February 27) David Greenberg briefly mentioned the Smithsonian's controversial Enola Gay exhibit. I am one of the many Americans who have not had the privilege of reviewing the exhibit or its writings. I know snippets of what had been planned here and there, but before it could open to the public, self-inflated censors ran howling through the streets and caused the exhibit to be canceled. I resent being denied the opportunity to make up my own mind as to what the exhibit symbolized.

From what I read, the Smithsonian was trying to present a balanced view of the atomic bombings of Japan, and ask the question, was it really necessary? It is a crucial question in a free society and does not impugn the motives of those who had to make that decision armed with fewer facts than we now possess.

Many people had reservations about using the bomb on civilian targets during and after the war, and these were responsible thoughtful people high in government and scientific circles.

Freedom suffered a moral defeat when the Smithsonian bowed to political pressure and canceled an important exhibit that would help everyone understand the significance of August 1945.

CHARLES A. WEBB
Kent, Washington

To the editors:

David Greenberg's comment that "The meddlesome Republicans who canned the exhibit view history the same way they view art: not to provoke thought in the pursuit of truth, but to transmit a simple political message" is enlightening. For years I had labored under the illusion that it was Marxists and other leftists who believed that history and art served only to advance a political agenda. Now I see. All along, Michel Foucault, Karen Finley, Andres Serrano, Larry Kramer et al. have been Republicans!

DANIEL LOVE GLAZER
Chicago, Illinois

To the editors:

I much appreciated David Greenberg's notes on the rise of the Nexis column, in which a pundit substitutes a computer search for insight. Ironically, one good indication of the trend is that the word "Nexis" appears in the database 534 times in 1992, 898 times in 1993 and 1,491 times in 1994. Now surely there's a column in those numbers.

MATTHEW BUDMAN
Highland Park, New Jersey

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FROM WASHINGTON

Class is in

Facing the prospect of a voter revolt in California, President Clinton has ordered an "urgent review" of affirmative action programs. It seems a classic, doomed Clinton venture—trying to please both sides on an issue of principle where a clear decision is required. Either society gives preferences to minorities and women or it doesn't, right?

Well, yes and no. It turns out Clinton's not the only one searching for a Third Way on affirmative action. Practically everybody is. Senate Majority Leader Bob Dole has called for hearings, not to root out reverse discrimination, but to discover if there are "other, more equitable ways to expand opportunities" for minorities and women. Even hard-core opponents of race preferences, such as Charles Murray, typically claim to support the "original conception" of affirmative action. According to Murray's latest book, this means that in "the case of two candidates who are fairly closely matched otherwise, universities should give the nod to the applicant from the disadvantaged background." Murray would merely limit this preference so that the average black student would be not "more than half a standard deviation below the rest of the student body." (What's half a standard deviation among friends?)

There are good reasons for this urge to compromise. Erstwhile supporters of affirmative action are beginning to admit that its poisonous side effects now overwhelm its benefits. Yet simply banning race and sex discrimination, without anything more, seems a weak response to the hard persistence of unequal opportunity. Is there nothing in between? Maybe there is. But some middle grounds are more stable than others. A quick survey of the four leading Third Ways:

Goals, not quotas. This hoary approach draws a sharp distinction between rigid hiring and admissions "quotas" (bad) and mere "goals" or "timetables" (good). Unfortunately, reverse discrimination is reverse discrimination, whether it's pro-

duced by pursuit of a quota or a goal. A white male who loses his job as a result is likely to be furious either way.

"Casting a wide net." Thomas Wood, one of the authors of the California anti-affirmative action initiative, says it wouldn't stop the government from taking out special ads in black newspapers to attract potential employees. That's "good and positive," he told *The Los Angeles Times*. This distinction—between drumming up applicants and actual hiring decisions—has also been ridiculed. "If you place an ad in a newspaper intending to reach one race, you're making it easier for one race to get that job," says another initiative supporter, California State Senator Tom Campbell. "It's the same kind of thing as saying 'I'll give you five points.' Logically, it's only a matter of degree."

Really? A basketball coach may make special efforts to recruit in black neighborhoods. That doesn't mean, when it's time to pick a team, that he doesn't pick the best players regardless of race.

"Develop people's capacities." The problem with the "wide net" rationale is that it won't justify much more than aggressive advertising. President Clinton tried to stretch the argument a bit in his recent news conference, endorsing "an extra effort to develop the capacities of people" who have "raw ability, but maybe a disadvantaged background." Sounds reasonable. But here Campbell's objection starts to bite—at least if "disadvantaged" is defined by race or sex. Everybody, after all, has some hidden ability that could be developed by "extra effort." Why should white men lose out because the government decides to only "develop the capacities" of blacks and women?

Class, not race. Perhaps the "disadvantaged" deserve an extra break because they, more than the "advantaged," are likely to have such untapped talents. But if that's the rationale, then affirmative action should be restricted to those who are actually disadvantaged, not those who belong to a certain race. The son of a poor white coal miner is more likely to have undiscovered abilities than the daughter of a black Harvard professor.

Here we arrive at the hottest idea in social engineering: the notion that class should replace race and gender as the basis for affirmative action. Supreme Court Justice William Douglas advanced this idea more than two decades ago. More recently it has been embraced by the right. Dinesh D'Souza ends his neo-conservative screed, *Illiberal Education*, with a call for affirmative action based on "socioeconomic disadvantage." Jus-

tice Antonin Scalia once said he "strongly" favored the idea. Justice Clarence Thomas has suggested it as well, as has Murray. Jack Kemp endorses it. Even Clinton now talks about emphasizing "need-based programs." It's almost unanimous.

Class-based affirmative action has an obvious appeal. It treats people as individuals, avoiding toxic generalizations based on race. It can be presented as an extension of meritocracy—lower-class candidates, with their hidden abilities, will eventually outperform more privileged rivals. But the virtues of the idea are almost immediately clouded over by doubts. Scalia ridiculed the complexities of a racial "handicapping system," but—

as Michael Kinsley has pointed out—administering Scalia's class-based scheme might require an even more complex calculation, rating every applicant on a "disadvantage scale." (Who gets more bonus points—a poor white from a lousy rural school or a black ghetto kid from a decent "magnet" school?)

Then there's the question of stigma. Race-based affirmative action, we're told, afflicts its beneficiaries with crippling self-doubt. They are never sure they really measure up. Will someone who gets into Yale by virtue of "socioeconomic disadvantage" be any less stigmatized? Richard Kahlenberg, author of a forthcoming book advocating class-based preferences, argues that there is no pre-existing stereotype—of the poor as "less-qualified"—for such doubts to play into. Perhaps. But class-based affirmative action, like the race version, will still reward those who play the victim. Do we want a society in which every ambitious student learns to nurture his class grievances as a source of future power?

All this suggests class-based preferences should be tightly restricted. It would be handy, in fact, if the preference could be limited to a small, well-defined class, at the very bottom of society. This class exists: the "underclass," 2 or 3 million impoverished citizens living in neighborhoods filled with non-working non-families. Indeed, one implication of current Republican rhetoric is that society can be divided into two groups: "normal" Americans in the mainstream working culture, and underclass Americans, mainly black, trapped in a ghetto "culture of poverty." If Clinton must embrace class-based preferences, why not restrict them to this latter group? Then he could tell Republicans: if you end ghetto poverty, you can end affirmative action.

MICKEY KAUS

MARCH 27, 1995

LIFT THE BAN

"I charge all of you to carry out this policy with fairness, with balance..."—President Clinton, July 20, 1993.

"All service-members will be treated with dignity and respect."—Defense Department Guidelines on Homosexual Conduct in the Armed Forces, July 19, 1993.

It has been a year since the U.S. military implemented the policy known as "Don't Ask, Don't Tell, Don't Pursue, Don't Harass," with regard to homosexuals in the military. All these don'ts were a tortured compromise between the Clinton administration and the Congress. Roughly speaking, the deal went like this: the ban on gay servicemembers would stand, but the military would go easier on them. The military would not directly ask soldiers if they were gay, as long as they were discreet. There would be no open-ended witch-hunts, no invasive snooping through private lives or possessions. Homosexuals—as long as they lied about themselves—would be treated with respect.

Many of us who had been arguing for a simple end to the ban felt that, under the circumstances, this insulting deal was the least-bad option. It was a pragmatic, quarter-way measure, a first stop on the way to full decency. We made a bet that the Pentagon would keep its side of the bargain. (See "Light in the Closet," *TNR*, August 9, 1993.)

We were wrong. The facts about the Clinton compromise are incontestably awful. A year later, the rate of discharge from the military on the grounds of homosexuality has remained steady: about .04 percent of total personnel were booted last year. In the Air Force, the discharge rate has even jumped, from 111 airmen ousted in 1992 to 180 in 1994. Memos were drafted by the Navy and the Air Force in June and November of last year plainly directing commanders to flout the new policy, by allowing open-ended investigations of personnel, questioning of "parents, siblings and close friends," and off-line inquiries into the private lives of servicemembers. Among the U.S. Marine Corps based in Okinawa, Japan, a witch-hunt last spring that entrapped twenty-one marines resembled the worst of the past. In all, the Servicemembers Legal Defense Network (SLDN), the only group to monitor these abuses, meticulously recorded some 340 separate violations of the policy in its first year.

The report makes for sobering reading. In Florida, recruiters asked one recruit whether she was homosex-

ual five times, verbally and on outdated written forms. One chief-of-boat asked a sailor, "You're not going to tell me you're a fucking faggot, are you?" (The Pentagon clearly prefers the other kind.) In D.C., a security clearance investigator said to a servicemember, "I'm not going to ask you if you're homosexual, but if I did ask, how would you respond?" An Air Force doctor's mother was called by an official who inquired about her son's sexuality. A South Carolina corporal was turned in by his Naval psychologist for asking questions about homosexuality in private counseling sessions. Inquiry officials in North Carolina asked more than twenty-five servicemembers to speculate about the sexuality of one marine. A seaman faces discharge after his roommate turned over private letters from his personal desk. Where people are harassed—death threats are not unknown—for allegedly being gay, the victims are often too afraid to seek protection, because they fear that telling the authorities will lead to their discharge. Women are especially victimized: they account for about 25 percent of the cases being handled by the SLDN, way out of proportion to their numbers.

What's going on here? Is this mess the work of rogue commanders? The memos that enforce policy violations suggest otherwise. More revealing, no officials who have flouted "Don't Ask, Don't Tell" have been disciplined. Even when officials have admitted to violations, they've nonetheless argued at discharge boards that those transgressions aren't grounds for servicemembers to object. There are, in short, no costs for subversion—and there is even subtle encouragement. When we asked the Pentagon to comment on SLDN's report, they told us that it was not being dismissed, but that they believe the policy in general is working.

It sure is. The policy is working as a cover for persecuting Americans who serve their country. It has made protest look unreasonable while keeping discrimination intact. The compromise, in short, has failed in the worst possible way; it is now the principal means to perpetuate the old persecution. The only honorable thing for the president to do is what he should have done two years ago: lift the ban by executive order, let the Congress overrule it and fight the ban in the courts. The enemies of lifting the ban, it is apparent, are the enemies of the most elementary of decencies. Does the president really wish to be counted among them? •



NOTEBOOK

SIC TRANSIT: Los Angeles County, facing budget cuts, set 3,000 prisoners free before the end of their sentences, in order to save money.... Thirteen-year-old Tammy Lynn Escilsen was held by police in Florida to face charges that she called seven University Medical Center emergency room patients and falsely told them they had tested HIV-positive. One 16-year-old she allegedly phoned tried to commit suicide after receiving the call.... North Dakota PTA treasurer Lori Dillon was sentenced to six months in jail for stealing \$9,773 that students raised by selling candy.... New York City P.S. 100 principal Stuart Possner was charged with stealing \$76,000 in school funds, partially obtained from forcing students to watch wrestling movies for a \$2 fee and keeping the money.... Jerry Williams, a habitual criminal under California's three strikes law, was sentenced to twenty-five years to life for taking a slice of pizza from children on a Redondo Beach pier.... Undercover sheriff deputies, working on a drug operation in Clearwater, Florida, arrested their suppliers before learning that they were undercover police officers working on a sting.... South Carolina entrepreneur Howard Fogle began importing "Russian Roulette," a new vodka, each bottle labeled with a warning that the name should not encourage the gun-to-head game of chance.... Colorado police said suspect Jeff Odenthal shouted "Shoot me! Shoot me!" before they shot him.... Spanky the Clown won the Republican nomination to be mayor of Chicago.

THE MISSING LINK: In a March 4 letter to *The New York Times*, Pat Robertson deflected charges that his best-selling 1991 book *The New World Order* was an anti-Semitic conspiracy tract by noting that his primary source was none other than Carroll Quigley, Bill Clinton's Georgetown University professor of history. After

declaring that "there is nothing new about the observation that there is a connection between the world of high finance and the United States foreign policy establishment," Robertson went on to declare that, "in my book, I rely heavily on the pioneering work of Carroll Quigley, Bill Clinton's professor and mentor at Georgetown." Robertson is right: his book is replete with references to Quigley; and no man played a greater role in shaping Clinton's thinking than Quigley. During the 1992 presidential campaign Clinton repeatedly cited Quigley's stress on social justice. But Quigley also had a dark, conspiratorial streak. In his 1,311-page tome titled *Tragedy and Hope* and in his book *The*

Anglo American Establishment, Quigley demonstrated how Cecil Rhodes and Lord Milner established a group called the Round Table that formed the inner circle of various front groups such as Chatham House and the American Council on Foreign Relations. "I know of the operations of this network," wrote Quigley, "because I have studied it for twenty years and was permitted for two years, in the early 1960s,

to examine its papers and secret records." "This network... has no aversion to cooperating with the communists, or any other groups, and frequently does so." So nefarious was this inner circle that even Quigley's prize student, Bill Clinton, was sucked into it by accepting the Rhodes Scholarship. Now Robertson has made common cause with Clinton in invoking Quigley. Could there be a diabolical conspiracy among the three men? Is this the crucial "missing link" alluded to by Robertson in his book? To cite Pat's standard closing line, more on that in a later chapter.

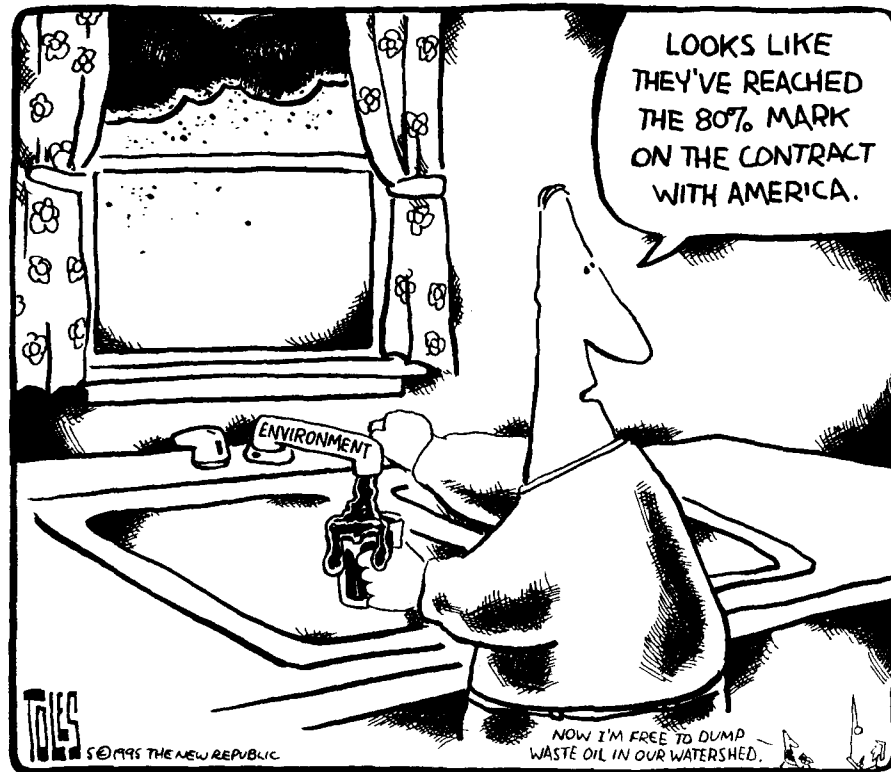
BREAKING NEWS:

Calls to quit EU fish policy are rejected

—*The Financial Times*, January 11.

Scientists see quakes in L.A. future

—*The Oregonian*, January 28.



Wachtler tells graduates that life in jail is demeaning

—*The Buffalo News*, February 26.

(Thanks to John Wood of Seattle, Washington; Michael MacVeigh of Portland, Oregon; and Eileen Vanderburgh, of East Amherst, New York.)

HOLOCAUST IN D.C.: Toni Morrison came to town on March 3 to receive an honorary degree from Howard University, a school that has been struggling recently to complicate its image as a bastion of separatism, Afrocentrism and all-purpose black rage. Morrison's speech set back the cause considerably. According to *The Washington Post*:

She went on to present "a little scenario" analyzing the current situation of African Americans.... She began her scenario with a reference to Hitler's plan for the extermination of the Jews. "Before there was a Final Solution, there was a first one. And after the first, there was a second, and after the second, there was a third. Who knows how many more? Because the descent into a final solution is not a jump. It's one step and then another and then another." Morrison outlined these steps in a measured, deliberate voice. First comes the necessity to "construct an inferior enemy and use that enemy as both focus and diversion." This is followed by "overt and coded name-calling, verbal abuse." A further step is to "reward mindlessness and apathy with little pleasures, tiny seductions—a few minutes on television, a few lines in the press." Next "one has to gather from among the enemy collaborators who agree with and sanitize the process of dispossession. Then you are able to completely take the next step—pathologize the enemy. For example recycle 'scientific racism' and the myth of racial superiority....' At the end, you 'criminalize the enemy,' which in turn allows you to 'prepare, budget for, and rationalize the building of holding arenas ... especially for the males and absolutely [for] the children. Last, maintain at all costs silence.'"

This is not the first time that Morrison has used the genocidal metaphor to describe the predicament of African Americans, but this time, she has surpassed even herself. "Holding arenas"! Morrison's listeners may be forgiven if they left Howard with the impression that

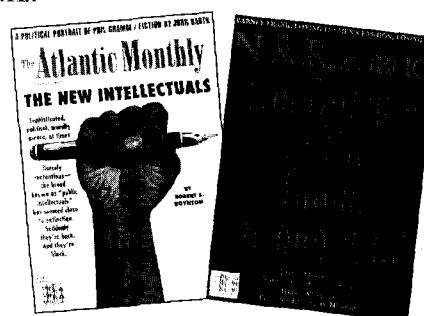
there are places very much like concentration camps in America. We cite the *Post*'s report, incidentally, because the university authorities would not distribute the text of its honoree's address. We don't blame them.

BACK RENT: On March 7, Democratic Senatorial Campaign Committee Chair Bob Kerrey sent a letter to Ben Nighthorse Campbell, prizewinning jewelry designer and the Senate's newest Republican, demanding that he return over \$255,000 in Democratic money donated to his campaign. "I am sure you will agree that had you been the nominee of the Republican Party the

DSCC would not have felt compelled to provide you with the critical resources necessary to win your race," whined Kerrey in his letter. "As a man of honor and integrity, I would hope that you will reimburse the DSCC for its expenses from the race... We pledge to use these funds for a worthy cause in 1996 consistent with the goals and philosophies of the Democratic Party." Oh, come off it. Sure, Nighthorse Campbell's

switch is a little mystifying, but these sort of financial recriminations could soon get out of hand. Shouldn't Senate Democrats who reversed course on the balanced budget amendment reimburse all deficit-hawk contributors? Shouldn't Bill Clinton reimburse the Democratic Leadership Council?

O.K., O.K.:



(Thanks to about a zillion readers.) •

NATIONAL INSECURITY

WHY SPY?

By Charles Lane

Senator Daniel Patrick Moynihan has said that the Central Intelligence Agency should be abolished, because the cold war is over. If this idea is adopted, however, we will be deprived of such amusing tragicomedies as the recent French roll-up of a characteristically ham-handed CIA plot. American spies were trying to steal commercial secrets from the French government—as well as the answers to such questions as whether Prime Minister Édouard Balladur would run for president. But the informant on the receiving end of the proverbial suitcase of 500 Franc notes was a double agent.

Now that the laughter has died down, a serious question can be addressed: Should the CIA have been doing this in the first place? I don't mean spying on a "friend" like France. National security sometimes requires using agents in friendly nations—even those, like France, with whom we have officially agreed to share intelligence. Others do it to the United States all the time: just ask Jonathan Pollard, or the French agents we kicked out two years ago for stealing industrial secrets. Nor is it unheard of that U.S. agents should seek inside information about France's thinking on the GATT talks. Treaty negotiations are a basic function of the federal government, in which the CIA has long assisted.

What is new (relatively speaking) is the notion that America's next "battle" is the economic one with cold war allies such as France, Japan and Germany. Much of the intellectual impetus for "economic intelligence" comes from think tanks and scholars who view Japan and Germany as corporatist states with whom we are locked in a struggle for prosperity. Those countries, the argument goes, link all government functions, intelligence included, to trade, and so should we.

This vision—less urgent now that the U.S. economy has racked up several consecutive years of outperforming Japan and Europe, with little help from the CIA—suffers from basic ambiguities. For the most part, the huge foreign government contracts for construction, arms or aircraft that the CIA is most likely to learn of will go to only a handful of giant, capital-intensive American firms. A secret U.S. government campaign to ferret out competitively valuable information may be in these companies' interest. But is it in the *national* interest—particularly considering the cost per job?

Still, President Clinton has defined national security to include "economic security." For Clinton, the business of

foreign policy is business. American embassies have been ordered to promote exports and investment aggressively, and the intelligence community—beset by morale problems stemming from the Aldrich Ames case and desperate for a mission to justify itself—is under pressure to join the crusade. According to *The Washington Post*, Senators Arlen Specter and Bob Kerrey, the chairman and top Democrat on the Intelligence Committee, have prodded the agency to pass companies intelligence that affects their interests.

The CIA's policy, apart from a deviation during the Carter administration, has been to resist on the sensible grounds that it would inevitably wind up playing favorites. Former Director Robert Gates used to quote a case officer as saying, "I'm prepared to give my life for my country, but not for a company." Director James Woolsey, who resigned in January, generally agreed. But he did buy into the concept to a certain degree. In 1993 he boasted of the CIA's efforts to discover violations of the Foreign Corrupt Practices Act (i.e., bribes) by foreign companies or governments. The agency found that the French had bribed Brazilian officials to land a \$1.4 billion contract to provide Brazil with a radar system; the CIA then told the State Department, which told Brazil. Raytheon got the contract. Similarly, U.S. firms in 1994 snatched away from France a bundle of lucrative arms and aircraft sales to Saudi Arabia.

There is a naïveté to the notion that the CIA's veil of secrecy somehow confers special competence to sniff out vital economic data. This is, after all, the bureaucracy that missed Ames's double-dealing for ten years, and flubbed the answer to the most important economic question with which it was concerned for forty years: the health of the Soviet economy. On a matter such as, say, trends in oil prices, there is probably

little that a CIA analyst can divine from secret sources that a Commerce Department analyst working from the ample open sources cannot. Indeed, why should the CIA be able to do a better job at this than Salomon Brothers—which can pay the best people more?

Nevertheless, experts from the agency are now competing for contacts abroad with State Department commercial and economic attachés—just as CIA agents thrust into the drug war have fought turf battles with the Drug Enforcement Administration. Economic intelligence-gathering is a redundant activity that dilutes the agency's focus and stretches its resources. If we need a clandestine foreign intelligence service, it is to gather information and carry out covert actions related to classic security matters. That means political and military threats such as terrorism, weapons proliferation and hostile political movements. That is enough to keep the CIA busy.

There's no guarantee that more reports from Langley will help protect us from economic "threats," even if the reports are accurate. Presidents often ignored or misinterpreted CIA briefings on the Soviet threat. Months ago, Clinton Treasury officials were perfectly aware, through basically open channels, that Mexico's peso was overvalued and headed for a crash. Fat lot of good that did us. •



TORTURED LOGIC

By Peter Schuck

The Contract with America is about to be breached. Major civil litigation proposals just passed the House and now go to the Senate. If enacted, they will transform tort law, including the laws governing product liability and other personal injury claims. For those damaged by corporate wrongdoing, this new legal order will not be a pretty sight.

While the pending legislation contains some promising ideas, most of it flagrantly violates the contract's three central assumptions: that the dead hand of federal uniformity is stifling innovation and local choice; that middle-class and low-income consumers and accident victims need greater legal protection; and that the law must be based on "common sense"—cheap, simple, predictable and less lawyer-friendly. These violations should seriously trouble not only liberals but also the conservatives and neo-liberals who subscribe to the contract's tenets.

Consider first the "Common Sense Product Liability and Legal Reform Act." Ever since colonial times, tort law has been governed almost exclusively by state law. State courts and legislatures have gradually refined this law, in some cases even eliminating it and substituting no-fault systems, as with workplace and auto accidents. The new legislation would change much of this by making products liability law federal, and for no good reason. (The contract's commitment to preserving states' diversity against "one size fits all" federal rules evidently does not apply to those federal rules that Newt Gingrich favors.) While objective experts have rightly criticized much of tort law, they have seldom objected to torts' state law status. Quite the contrary.

The Republicans, however, claim that state-to-state differences in product liability threaten the financial and competitive well-being of U.S. firms. They maintain that uniform interstate rules are needed. For two decades, Congress has rejected such pleas. In the single instance when it ventured into the field—regulating claims against some vaccine manufacturers—it decided to use existing state law rules almost entirely rather than adopting a new set of federal ones.

Besides, since the 1960s, states' laws have tended to converge. Many states have adopted strict product liability principles that do not require plaintiffs to prove that a manufacturer was negligent. Of course, product liability

plaintiffs still take home bigger awards for a given injury in some states than others. Notoriously, plaintiffs' lawyers like to try cases in front of generous juries in East Texas and the Bronx, while defendants prefer the more parsimonious juries of New England. But it is not the rules that cause interstate variation in the size of the awards juries hand down; it is the jurors. Uniform rules would have little effect on jury awards within a state, since both federal and state juries in any given state are drawn from roughly similar pools of potential jurors.

The case for a federal products liability law, then, cannot rest on the inherent value of uniform state laws. It must rest, if at all, on the superior content of the rules that Congress would impose on the states. Would the newly mandated rules be sufficiently better than existing state rules to justify pre-empting them? For the most part, the answer is no.

To be sure, several of the new rules are designed to deal with real weaknesses in state tort law. Some states' punitive damage rules, for example, allow juries to add exorbitant monetary penalties on top of compensatory damages. Using the relaxed standards of civil law rather than the more rigorous ones of criminal law, they can impose severe financial punishment simply by finding that the defendant was reckless.

Until recently, demands for punitive damages were rare in tort cases. Evidently, they are now the norm. Yale professor George Priest, studying two Alabama counties, found that almost all tort plaintiffs now seek punitive damages. Although awards are far less common, juries eager to "send a message" can render outlandish awards that the courts often uphold. In an Alabama case last

year, for example, a life insurance company's agent committed fraud on a \$25,000 policy, causing the policyholders two weeks of sleeplessness but no real economic losses; yet the court upheld a \$25 million award. The new bill is right to address this issue.

The new legislation also rightly zeroes in on some states' joint liability rules. These rules allow plaintiffs in many multi-defendant cases to hold one defendant liable for all of the damages—including those it did not cause—so long as the jury cannot readily distinguish its causal contribution from those of the other defendants. This rule is unjust when the most culpable defendants are insolvent (or otherwise immune from paying), while the fault of the one who must pay was relatively minor.

Unfortunately, the House's solutions to these real problems are flawed. The bill offers two solutions to the issues of punitive damages and joint liability: capping punitives at either \$250,000 or three times the compensatory damages; and limiting joint liability to the plaintiff's economic damages (damages for pain and suffering would be paid only by those clearly at fault). Although these reforms are steps in the right direction, they need further refinement. The punitives formula is too rigid for the extraordinary range of tort cases. The new joint liability rule will simply replace



one injustice with another by making a wholly innocent victim rather than a partly guilty defendant bear the risk of some defendants' inability to pay.

The "Attorneys Accountability Act" also sounds promising. This reform would alter litigation in federal court cases in which state law controls the dispute. The most far-reaching change would impose a "loser pays" rule. A party who rejects another party's settlement offer and then fails to obtain an outcome more favorable than the rejected offer would pay a price for his intransigence: specifically, he would foot his adversary's post-offer expenses, including attorneys' fees. This amounts to a radical reversal of the traditional American rule, under which each party bears his own expenses. It betrays the contract's commitment to make the law protect middle-class and poor people. This reform would effectively bar them from the federal courts by threatening them with ruinous costs if their suits turned out to be unsuccessful—a risk that only the wealthy could afford. If Congress really wants to help ordinary tort victims, it should support a proposal advanced by University of Virginia law professor Jeffrey O'Connell and others that would tie plaintiffs lawyers' compensation more closely to the work and value they actually produce when cases settle quickly.

"Loser pays" would either wreak great injustice or be ineffectual. A person of modest means could sue only on a fairly sure thing, when he might find a contingency fee lawyer to take his case. But since the new rule would apply only to certain federal court cases, plaintiffs could readily avoid its bite; they would need only to file their claims in state court (rather than federal), where the traditional rule would apply. There are good arguments for keeping such cases in state courts, but this is surely a roundabout way to do it.

A third goal of the contract is to simplify the law so that it is cheaper, more predictable and makes "common sense." But, again, the proposed legislation will do just the opposite, creating makework for lawyers. The new law will give rise to endless legal uncertainties. Under the "loser pays" reform, courts will have to determine the cost of a certain species of fee (known as a "non-contingent" fee) that simply does not exist for most personal injury claims. The reform also permits a judge to avoid "loser pays" if the rule would be "manifestly unjust." This term, however, is open-ended, and the provision would probably require courts to compare the parties' wealth—an action that violates traditional notions of legal equality.

Perhaps the greatest confusion will be sown as courts attempt to integrate ill-defined new federal rules with whatever parts of state tort law Congress meant to preserve (a matter left unclear). An entirely new body of statutory interpretation will be necessary: state courts will be trying to figure out which parts of their long-evolved tort jurisprudence remain viable, while federal judges, who must often rely entirely on state law, will be more confused than ever about what that law is. To Joe Sixpack, this new jurisprudence will be even more tech-

nical and opaque than the old one.

So much for "common sense" reforms to reduce legal complexity and protect ordinary Americans from federal overreaching. In an act of legal contortion worthy of the most cunning Wall Street lawyer, the Contract with America has managed to breach itself.

PETER SCHUCK, the Baldwin Professor of Law at Yale University, writes frequently on legal subjects, including tort reform.

Republican legal onslaught II.

SEARCH AND SEIZE

By Jeffrey Rosen

The Senate Judiciary Committee this week debated a bill that would abolish the exclusionary rule, which bars illegally seized evidence from criminal cases. Instead, the bill would let victims of unreasonable searches sue the government for tort damages. "This hearing is an interesting and worthwhile academic exercise," intoned Senator Joseph Biden, who proceeded to browbeat the Republican's star witness, Akhil Amar of Yale Law School. Amar, a liberal Democrat, wrote an article in 1994 that criticized the exclusionary rule as a betrayal of the original understanding of the Constitution. The Senate bill was drafted by his former student, Michael O'Neil, who is now counsel to Republican Senator Orrin Hatch of Utah.

The Republican fixation on the exclusionary rule is a Federalist Society eccentric priority. In 1988, after interviewing hundreds of police officers and prosecutors, the American Bar Association concluded that "the police ... do not consider search and seizure proscriptions to be a serious obstacle." So why are Republicans clamoring to abolish the exclusionary rule when law enforcement officials have moved on to other battles? The impulse seems to be cultural as well as political, and it reflects suspicion of judge-created social reforms.

The Fourth Amendment says "the right of the people to be secure in their persons, houses, papers, and effects, against unreasonable searches and seizures, shall not be violated," but it unhelpfully says nothing about how the right should be enforced. For the first century after American independence, the remedy for an unreasonable search was simple: sue the offending officer for compensatory or punitive damages under trespass or tort law. The most famous case of the colonial era was *Wilkes v. Wood*, in which crown officials, acting without a warrant, broke into Wilkes's house and seized his private diaries. English juries made the crown

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pay 100,000 pounds in damages; and delirious colonists, from Wilkes-Barre, Pennsylvania, to Wilkes County, Georgia, named their villages after the litigious hero.

No court, in England or America, excluded evidence in criminal trials until the Supreme Court invented the exclusionary rule in the 1886 *Boyd* case. Even friends of the rule agree the Court's reasoning was mystifying. To use a man's diary or personal papers against him in a criminal trial, the Court held, would force him "to be a witness against himself," in violation of the *Fifth* Amendment. With convoluted logic, the Court then announced that the Fourth and Fifth Amendments "run almost into each other." Courts therefore should refuse to consider evidence illegally seized under the Fourth Amendment, in order to prevent a Fifth Amendment violation. But the Court has never explained how the admission of a bloody glove, for example, forces a suspect to be a witness against himself. In the 1970s, the Burger court backed away from the claim that the exclusionary rule is a constitutional right and defended it instead as a "prophylactic rule," necessary to deter future police misconduct. But the Court has never explained why, if the exclusionary rule is *not* required by the Constitution, the justices had any business imposing it on the states in the first place.

Despite its muddled pedigree, the exclusionary rule has proved, in practice, an effective way of reforming overzealous police forces in an age when state and federal governments provide few other remedies. And its social costs are hardly overwhelming. A 1983 study by Thomas Davies estimated that between 0.6 percent and 2.35 percent of all felony arrests were lost because of the exclusionary rule. (The numbers are lower for violent crimes, and higher for drug offenses.) Nevertheless, there are other, less tangible costs. The exclusionary rule awards a windfall to guilty victims of illegal searches. And it fails to compensate the innocent people whom the Amendment was designed to protect: when a suspect is innocent, there is no evidence to exclude.

Although the Hatch bill is coherent in theory, the real problem is in the details. For example, the bill would allow innocent victims of illegal searches to recover no more than \$10,000 in punitive damages. This falls far short of the "ruinous damages" recommended by the Framers. It also falls short of the frugal damages recommended by the Republican tort reform act, which would cap punitive damages at about three times actual damages. With such meager incentives, innocent plaintiffs won't easily find lawyers to represent them. (During the hearing, Hatch said he was amenable to raising the caps.)

The more serious flaw is the bill's treatment of victims of illegal searches who turn out to be *guilty* of some crime or other. If you are convicted of any crime based on evidence obtained in an illegal search—even possession of one marijuana cigarette—you can sue only for damages to person and property, not for punitive damages or attorneys' fees. Since most victims of illegal searches are,

in fact, guilty, the lack of punitive damages in the vast majority of cases is tantamount to no deterrent at all. The police, therefore, might declare open season on suspects who won't have the incentive or ability to sue. Or they might make crude economic decisions about whether the cost of breaking down a door are outweighed by the likelihood of finding drugs inside.

Amar testified that juries should decide damage claims against the United States, because "the jury is perfectly placed to decide, in any given situation, whom it fears more, the cops or the robbers." But given the mercurial behavior of recent juries, this might lead to wildly inconsistent verdicts. In some areas, such as Simi Valley, California, white juries might refuse to compensate the victims of egregious police brutality, because of their irrational suspicion of convicted felons. In others, such as Washington, D.C., black juries might go overboard in the other direction, because of their irrational suspicion of the police. The Hatch bill may be amended to give plaintiffs the option of choosing judges or juries.

If the Hatch bill is fixed to authorize harsh punitive damages for all victims of illegal searches, innocent as well as guilty, it might be taken seriously by liberals. But it would then lose support among conservatives, who fear that too much deterrence could paralyze the police. Because the bill, in its current form, has no apparent political constituency, the Senate seems more likely to adopt the alternative proposed by House Republicans, who would extend the "good faith exception" to the exclusionary rule in an especially baffling way.

Since the 1980s, the Supreme Court has held that when the police make understandable factual errors in good faith, the exclusionary rule doesn't apply. Just last week, for example, the Court held that evidence seized under a warrant that had expired due to a computer error shouldn't be excluded, since the police officer was not at fault. The House bill, however, would excuse legal as well as factual errors committed by the police. This is a radical step that the Court has refused to take, and the results are literally unintelligible. According to the House bill, evidence should be admitted whenever a police officer has an "objectively reasonable belief" that he is acting legally, even though he is, in fact, acting illegally. How an officer can be reasonably ignorant of the law is a paradox Congress has yet to explain. Even more embarrassingly, the House refused to apply the expanded good faith exception to agents of the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco and Firearms and the Internal Revenue Service, the two law enforcement agencies that House Republicans seem to fear the most.

Although some civil libertarians have been hyperbolic about the Republican proposals—"Ending of the exclusionary rule . . . to me is the same as ending the *Fourth* Amendment," Nat Hentoff declared on "Nightline"—the rule appears, in practice, to provide tolerable deterrence at relatively low cost. There are plausible academic alternatives to the exclusionary rule, but none, alas, that a majority of the 104th Congress is likely to embrace. •



How COOL IS PBS?

By Bruce Bawer

If Congress pulls the plug on public television, what will we be losing? In an attempt to find out, I brewed a pot of coffee one recent Thursday morning and spent the next fourteen hours watching PBS. Since I live in New York City, I was able to sample four different PBS stations. There is, of course, Channel 13 (WNET), which provides much original programming for other PBS stations and is generally perceived as the city's classiest PBS outlet (many Manhattanites carry Channel 13 tote bags as testimony to their cultural sophistication and pledge-week munificence). But the New York metropolitan area also has channels 21 (WLIW), 25 (WNYE) and 31 (WNYC). Herewith, an hour-by-hour report from the front:

10 a.m. Puppets on 13? Women doing push-ups on 31? Tropical scenery and a voice-over extolling "exotic and timeless Indonesia" on 25? I reject all these options to watch 21's "Assignment: the World," a news show for schoolchildren. An anchor covers news stories, gives pop quizzes and tells us how viewers answered the question, "Should the school year be extended through the summer?" (No: 86 percent. Yes: 11 percent.) How about this question: Should kids be watching T.V. in school?

The anchor of "Assignment: the World" is a black woman. I mention this not because I am a "bean counter" but because, over the course of my day with PBS, it quickly becomes apparent that the people who produce these shows are bean counters—that the ethnic, racial and sexual mix of every program's cast is painstakingly calculated, arrived at by committee and derived from an essentially academic ideal.

From 10:30 to 11:00, passing on a cooking show and a reading of a children's story, I toggle between a half-hour class about forests and a charmless middle-aged bumpkin who teaches three attractive, poised kids in their early teens about dry ice. This man proves to be the first of several silly adult white males on PBS kids' shows. Note well: white male adults on these shows are not always silly—but silly people are nearly always adult white males. Indeed, it soon becomes clear that while PBS children's programming

claims to encourage respect for mature accomplishment, it also frequently drives home the message that adults are goofy, klutzy or unsavory, or at least have a lot to learn from kids.

11 a.m. "Sesame Street." This episode's running story concerns Bob, another silly white male who has been on the show forever and who, though he appears to be pushing 70, is still cultivating a boyish look. Bob is headed for a movie when Big Bird and another muppet ask why he's not going to the dance tonight. Bob says he can't dance. They talk him into taking lessons from one Celina.

We return to this story line every few minutes. In between we're given rapid-fire vignettes—some live-action and some animated, none lasting more than a minute—that stress the importance of cooperating, planning and sharing. A group of muppets clears a vacant lot and plants a garden, all the while singing about how "cooperation makes it happen." Other vignettes: toddlers (mostly black) learn to walk. Pirates (all white) sing about how "you gotta plan, plan, plan!" There's a rap song about school, a place where you "dance and sing" and "play" and "have fun." "Your teacher is smart," goes the song, "your teacher is cool." Meanwhile, Bob's getting discouraged about his terpsichoreal progress. But Big Bird straightens him out: "Stick with it and keep trying!" (Message: adults sometimes need to learn from children—or from childlike fowl.) Bob sticks with it, and that evening, trips the light fantastic with Celina.

At noon, eschewing "The Victory Garden," "The Frugal Gourmet" and a "Learn to Read" show for adults starring cookie mogul Wally "Famous" Amos, I choose a GED show about how to write. There's a storyline: a black woman department-store executive helps an underling, a white European woman, to write an application for a job as supervisor. Some of the "corrected" sentences are grammatically incorrect.

12:30 p.m. I switch from coffee to beer, dig into Chinese take-out, and watch "We Do the Work," produced by something called the California Working Group Board. The credits have an African motif, though the topic is American workers. Its purpose: to expose the "up side" of the "working [i.e. blue-collar] world." Actor Will Durst profiles New York's Transit Tech,

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whose students, nearly all black, talk about how good it feels to do a job well. Then Joe Spano of "Hill Street Blues" covers the construction of L.A.'s Century Freeway and an apprenticeship program for carpenters, many of them women. A white male carpenter says, "I wasn't sure that women belonged in the trades"; now he knows better. A black former welfare mother who has been through the program says, "I wanted to be accepted not as a minority or as a woman but as someone doing the job." Nonetheless the show is full of references to race and gender.

1 p.m. "Introduction to Spanish." Entirely in Spanish, the program shifts, soap-opera style, among three storylines set in Mexico. You might ask how this teaches Spanish. Apparently you need the accompanying workbook. Without it, this isn't any more useful than watching a real Spanish-language serial on Univision.

At 1:30 Charlie Rose and John Travolta solemnly analyze the ups and downs of Travolta's career. At 2:00, I switch to "Barney," on which the purple dinosaur and his pre-pubescent pals celebrate the third birthday of Baby Bop, a small hideous creature who is apparently a little girl dinosaur. Baby Bop, who is even more irritating than Barney, sings: "Look at me, me, me; I'm 3, 3, 3; I'm as happy as can be, be, be.... I'm a very, very, happy, happy, me, me, ME!!!" She reprises this tune several times over the course of the show. When it comes time for birthday cake, it turns out that *nobody* thought to bake one, so somebody produces a cupcake. Barney explains that if the kids use their imaginations, they can envision it as full-sized. Sure enough, the cupcake grows before our eyes. This business about "imagination" irks me, for "Barney" is premised on a contemptuous view of children's imaginations; wittier, more stylish kids' shows on Nickelodeon and Fox show a real respect for and responsiveness to children's imaginations.

"Barney" is followed by "Kidsongs." The premise: a

bunch of kids run a T.V. station that airs music videos for kids. The veejays are an Asian boy and a white girl; in headsets at the control panel are a black boy, a white boy and an Asian girl. The music videos are slapdash and include life lessons. In a video of "Take Me Out to the Ball Game," for instance, a scarecrow tells a boy at a Little League game, "If you really believe in your dreams, go get them," whereupon the sandlot dissolves into a major-league stadium. In a video of "Oh Dear, What Should the Color Be?" a screwy artist named Pierre the painter gets increasingly unhinged over his inability to decide which colors to use in a

painting. (Message: baseball players are American heroes, painters are foreign buffoons.)

4 p.m. I lapse and switch briefly to Fox for "Animaniacs." After hours of PBS, Steven Spielberg's cartoon show seems refreshingly clever and irreverent. Dutifully, though, I turn back to "Where in the World is Carmen Sandiego?" a busy, colorful game show designed to teach geography, and then to "Musical Encounter," which, to my surprise, actually seeks to educate without jazzing things up and dumbing things down. I switch to "Bill Nye the Science Guy" just in time to hear a kid rave: "It's cool! It's hot! It's science!" Today's topic: the sun. A kid says,

"Sunspots sure are cool!" We meet a "way-cool scientist" at some observatory.

At 5:00, in case you missed them earlier, "Sesame Street" is on 21, "Carmen Sandiego" on 13. This sort of redundancy often occurs on New York's public T.V. stations, leading one to wonder why there are four of them. Channel 31 is showing music videos. What are these doing on public television?

6 p.m. "The MacNeil/Lehrer NewsHour." After the ten-minute headline roundup comes an in-depth story on arts funding. For an outside-the-Beltway perspective, Robin MacNeil takes us to Colorado, where he interviews Jo Buntun Keel, a black theatrical producer in dramatic African garb, and Hollis Williford, a white



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sculptor in suit and tie. Keel supports the NEA; Williford declares that he is against "what the NEA has become ... a grant-chaser subcult of the arts" and says that art should be judged "on the level of excellence." Keel suggests that arts organizations applying for grants should be judged on "how they interact with the community which they serve" and describes the NEA as "a cultural asset to the Empire Nation." MacNeil also speaks by live remote to Senator Christopher Dodd, who supports the NEA because art "enlightens, provides vision and hope," and Representative Philip Crane, who rants predictably about Andres Serrano's "Piss Christ."

The show closes with an "essay" on homelessness by Roger Rosenblatt, a contributing editor to this magazine. While we see the usual shots of people sleeping in the street, Rosenblatt (shown in a brief talking-head shot in his elegant book-lined study) intones a plaintive voice-over: "Don't pass them by. Certainly the temptation to do so is strong. How many winters, how many homeless, how many times can you give and give again? ... You've got your own troubles, after all. You've got your own life. And you gave at the office, you always do. You do care, damn it. How often must it be proved? There's a limit on what one stranger can do for another. But don't pass them by. Too much else is passing them by." The segment's condescension takes in not only the homeless but the poor generally: we're given a brief glimpse of a trailer-park family who, through the MacNeil/Lehrer lens, look more alien than exotic and timeless Indonesia. The title of the essay, incredibly, is "Look Down."

"MacNeil/Lehrer" is often defended as the only one-hour evening news show on broadcast T.V. and, as the network evening news shows decline steadily, it tends to look better and better. Yet the show is a mish-mash—a headline roundup that's notable for neither depth nor breadth and "in-depth" coverage that too often resorts to unilluminating face-offs between familiar ideological extremes.

I switch channels only to get hit on for money by a Channel 21 executive who says, "Our legislators must hear from you" to "protect one of your most important resources—WLIW 21!" This is followed by a promo for "The Lawrence Welk Show" reruns.

At 7:30, I decide against "News from Italy" and "Face Off" (a version of "Crossfire" devoted to state and local news) and watch "Drugs and Youth," hosted by Michael Gross, the dad from "Family Ties." The show is unintentionally hilarious and feels twenty years old, though it was produced in 1990. With all the solemnity of John Travolta discussing his career, Gross explains that marijuana is a "gateway drug" that leads to harder drugs. He lists "warning signs" that your kid may be on drugs. Among them: wearing a T-shirt with a picture of a marijuana leaf.

8 p.m. "Literati." Novelist Ariel Dorfman interviews Paul Auster, who reads from his later novel, *Mr. Vertigo*,

and compares it with his earlier novels. An intelligent, absorbing half hour.

At 8:30, the choices are "This Old House"; a Canadian news roundtable show; "World of Film," on which a humorless, self-important white woman with a ponytail interviews two humorless, self-important women of color; and—on Channel 13—a news interview show called "Informed Sources," chaired by Andy Humm. Humm is a sometime program host on the Gay Cable Network, which showcases gay porn on public-access T.V. In the world of WNET, he seems the ideal token homosexual.

At 9 p.m., I pass over "Mystery!," "All Creatures Great and Small" and something in Korean to watch a British news show, "Dispatch International." Tonight's program explores the Rwanda crisis. Compelling, balanced.

For the rest of the evening I stick with Channel 13. At 10:00, I watch a profile of Diego Rivera. Though the show is honest about Rivera's fatuous idolization of Lenin, Stalin and Mao, it manages nonetheless to come off as a celebration of the artist's devotion to workers and "heroic peasants," and hurries past such uncomfortable ironies as the fact that it was a capitalist, Edsel Ford, who saved his murals at the Detroit Institute of Art from the wrath of the masses, who found them offensive.

Next, Walter Cronkite tells us to give money to Channel 13. Then it's time again for "Charlie Rose," whose guests include Laura D'Andrea Tyson, the new chair of the National Economic Council. The show is fine, just like a dozen others identical to it on CNBC and C-SPAN.

At midnight comes "Frontline." Tonight: "The Begging Game," a report on New York's homeless. The opening voice-over sounds uncomfortably familiar: "These days we've become impatient with the poor ... who to give to. Do they deserve it? Should we give at all? ... Giving has a bad name nowadays." But the rest of the show proves to be frank, compelling, free of both conservative animadversions and liberal sentimentality. Though it focuses on an unrepresentative figure—not an illiterate, drug-addicted young black man but an abstemious elderly white woman who is considerably more articulate than, say, John Travolta—the show is on target, both about the sense of community among street people and about the fact that many of them are largely victims of their own disinclination or inability to organize their lives, hold down a job, take care of a home. "Frontline" fills a real niche, routinely providing more serious, thoughtful reports than those on, say, "60 Minutes."

Yet even "Frontline," which may be as good as public T.V. gets, doesn't entirely redeem the whole enterprise. Yes, PBS children's programming is free of violence, and it encourages kids to get along with others—but it also tries to reconcile serious educational aims to a moral system in which the ultimate value is being "cool." While it's great for kids to learn to work

together, moreover, these shows' emphasis on communal values is so fierce that it often seems to leave little room for individual initiative and imagination. I wasn't surprised by a recent study indicating that "Sesame Street" makes no long-term difference in children's learning. As a rule, T.V. makes a lousy pedagogical aid—especially for kids, who need to get used to learning as a matter of active, disciplined engagement, not of passive viewing.

Moreover, while PBS provides some decent instructional shows for adults, The Learning Channel blows most of them out of the water. Want British sitcoms (now a staple of many PBS stations)? Watch "Absolutely Fabulous" on Comedy Central. What are Britcoms doing on PBS, anyway? Two of the upcoming programs most frequently advertised during my day of PBS-watching were "John Tesh Live at Red Rocks with the Colorado Symphony Orchestra" and an installment of "Live at Lincoln Center" featuring opera stars belting out show tunes. PBS's offense consists not just in airing

such stuff, but in getting many Americans accustomed to the notion that these sorts of things constitute serious cultural programming.

At its best, PBS offers a responsible corrective to the excesses of capitalism, a stirring example of the willingness of a democracy to fund media that examine it thoughtfully, meticulously, critically. At its worst, it's dreary, insipid, a dismaying example of patronizing cocktail-party liberalism, of the excesses of a mentality that judges people not by the content of their character but by their sex, race and political-correctness quotient. After my day in front of the tube, I found it difficult to avoid concluding that PBS, while continuing to provide some programming of real merit, gives us very little of value the likes of which most of us can't get elsewhere on television (though the alternatives, admittedly, are found largely on cable stations that some viewers don't receive). Does this mean the Corporation for Public Broadcasting should be scuttled? Maybe, maybe not. But I won't be staying up nights fretting about its survival. •

A manifesto for America's future.

FOR A NEW NATIONALISM

By John B. Judis and Michael Lind

I.

In January, as the value of the Mexican peso plummeted, President Clinton, Majority Leader Bob Dole and House Speaker Newt Gingrich agreed to a U.S. Treasury plan guaranteeing \$40 billion of new loans to the Mexican economy. The loans, it was hoped, would stop the peso's fall and also save the investments of American banks and mutual funds that had bought high-interest Mexican bonds after the passage of the North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA). As Congress began debating the deal, hundreds of CEOs and business lobbyists led by John W. Snow, the chairman of CSX and of the Business Roundtable, thronged Capitol Hill. With the president, the congressional leadership and the major corporations behind the bailout, approval by Congress seemed assured.

But it didn't happen. Democrats in the president's own party, many of whom had opposed NAFTA, and six

rebellious Republican freshmen, inspired in part by Pat Buchanan's arguments against the bailout, rejected the deal. Within a week, the entire lobbying effort had collapsed. Clinton finally had to use his executive authority to guarantee the bailout, bypassing Congress and the constituents of the dissident congressmen.

The political uproar over the bailout demonstrated one of the best-kept secrets of American politics—the inadequacy of the ideological division between "liberals" and "conservatives" that we inherited from the cold war era. On this issue, the most hard-line conservatives were on the same side as liberals such as Ohio Representative Marcy Kaptur. Opposition to the bailout was neither a "left-wing" nor "right-wing," "liberal" nor "conservative" position. It illustrated a growing fissure that cuts across conventional left-right distinctions in American politics—the challenge to the globalism of the American establishment by nationalism and populism.

The opposition to the bailout was clearly populist; hard-working Americans were being called upon to protect the earnings of the rich. "We're not bailing out the people of Mexico," declared Representative Duncan

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Hunter, a California Republican. "This is a Wall Street bailout." The opposition was also nationalist. "I had two town meetings over the weekend," reported Texas Democrat Gene Green. "People were saying, 'We have a hard enough time in this country for small businesses to get loans. Why should we loan money to a foreign country?'"

This combination of nationalism and populism surfaced clearly in the 1986 congressional elections, then in the presidential primaries in 1988 and in the primaries and the general election in 1992. Nationalist and populist sentiments underlay the appeal of Ross Perot's "MADE IN THE U.S.A." campaign and energized Clinton's campaign against Bush. In both parties, nationalism and populism are embraced by the rank and file and rejected by the elites. Most conservative activists opposed NAFTA even though Republican politicians and think tanks supported it. Similarly, most of the Democratic Party's base has favored some degree of trade protection, but liberal opinion makers at the Brookings Institution, *The Washington Post*, *The New York Times*, the Democratic Leadership Council and *THE NEW REPUBLIC* have joined elite conservatives in opposing any challenge to free-trade orthodoxy. We believe that in the coming years, the political debate will be increasingly shaped by populism and nationalism. The question will be what kind of populism and nationalism.

II.

The nationalist-populist revival in our current politics did not come out of nowhere. Two years ago, during the presidential campaign, it fueled the presidential race. The theme of Bill Clinton's 1992 campaign was "Putting People First," identifying American national interests with "those who do the work, pay the taxes, raise the kids and play by the rules." In his economic program, Clinton promised a host of populist and nationalist reforms—putting able-bodied welfare recipients to work, curbing excessive salaries for CEOs, closing tax loopholes on foreign companies in the United States, ending tax incentives that reward U.S. companies for moving abroad, discouraging former U.S. officials from lobbying for foreign firms, attaching strong labor and environmental standards to NAFTA and getting tough on trade talks with Japan. These kinds of promises were integral to what the public believed when they thought of Clinton as a "different kind of Democrat."

Once in office, however, Clinton reneged on almost every populist and nationalist plank in his platform. He waited until well in his second year to advance his welfare reform plan, and then did so only as a footnote to his health care initiative. He backed away from his promise to eliminate corporate tax deductions for salaries greater than \$1 million by exempting stock options from a CEO's income. He offered merely minor adjustments in the tax code for foreign firms in the United States and American

multinationals, both of which were avoiding American taxes through transfer pricing. He did not remove the tax incentives that make it more profitable for an American firm to move from Michigan to Thailand than from Michigan to Ohio. None of these measures would have meant the end of the deficit; but they would have signaled the administration's commitment to greater economic equality and to encouraging American firms to stay at home and employ American workers.

Similarly, Clinton's tough talk on trade lasted about four months. Under pressure from the Business Roundtable, Clinton and U.S. Trade Representative Mickey Kantor withdrew their demand for commissions that would enforce strong labor and environmental standards under NAFTA. The administration put greater priority on whether an insurance company could open branch offices in Mexico than on whether American workers' wages would be forced down by Mexican competition. When Clinton took office, he also promised to eliminate the annual \$60 billion trade deficit with Japan by imposing numerical targets. Facing opposition from Wall Street and Japan, Clinton settled in September 1994 for the kind of vague promises that had nullified past negotiations with the Japanese.

Clinton did act in the nation's economic interest by helping to reduce the deficit's rate of growth. Deficit reduction fits this nationalist-populist model because it reduces the need for the United States to lure foreign capital by means of high interest rates and enables the United States to follow a more aggressive trade strategy without fear of monetary blackmail, either from Wall Street or Tokyo. Ironically, Clinton justified his deficit plan by saying that Wall Street's bond traders had to be appeased if interest rates were to go down—capitulating to the financial blackmail that it is the purpose of deficit reduction to combat.

In foreign policy, Clinton and his advisers abandoned serious reconsideration of U.S. grand strategy and opted for a policy of inertia and drift driven largely by the strategies of allied countries (for example, in the Balkans) and the desire of the Pentagon to preserve cold war military commitments and spending levels. The Clinton administration's combination of multilateralist rhetoric with cautious realist practice, though preferable to recklessness, has run the risk of making American aloofness in many conflicts look like the result of weakness rather than discrimination.

Clinton's social policy has been divisive rather than unifying. In his campaign, by repudiating the racist rhetoric of Sister Souljah and endorsing an expansion of college opportunities through national service, Clinton seemed to stand for an egalitarian nationalism rather than a sectarian multiculturalism. But once in office, he made great show of observing quotas in hiring appointees (while still reserving the positions of highest authority for the dreaded white males). More

important, in recent months Clinton's Justice Department has become the last defender of the most absurd forms of affirmative action, including a school board's alleged right to fire a teacher solely because she is white.

Unfortunately, the new Republican majority in Congress doesn't have any better solutions to the country's problems. The Contract with America does not include a single word about foreign trade or foreign investment. The equivalent would be presenting a political platform in 1954 that did not mention the cold war or communism.

The Republican Party of Newt Gingrich and Richard Armey is committed to a primitive anti-statism and federalism that was anachronistic in 1895, to say nothing of 1995. Crippling the national government will not return power to the states, nor to the small entrepreneurs idealized by the Republicans' favorite lobby, the National Federation of Independent Business. Nor will it fortify the family, already buffeted by market forces. Weakening the federal government would only strengthen the hold that large corporations, banks and foreign governments that do not subscribe to Republican superstitions already have over the lives of ordinary Americans.

Republican fiscal policy is utterly incoherent, mixing enormous tax breaks with a call for balanced budgets. The foreign policy of the GOP is similarly inconsistent: on the one hand, the United States is to pull out of international organizations; on the other, America's military commitments are to be extended eastward in Europe with the expansion of NATO. Republican social policy is even more divisive than Clinton's watered-down multiculturalism. In the name of equal opportunity, Republicans such as Armey want to do away with the minimum wage. In the name of a "culture war," the conservatives cynically seek to exploit the divisions within American society over issues such as abortion, homosexuality and school prayer.

We are confident that Americans will eventually grow as disillusioned with the Gingrich-Gramm-Dole Republicans as they have become with Clinton and the Democrats. When they do, Americans are likely to look toward some version of nationalism and populism that has been erupting into our politics for more than a

decade, long before the recent uproar over the bailout of investors in Mexico.

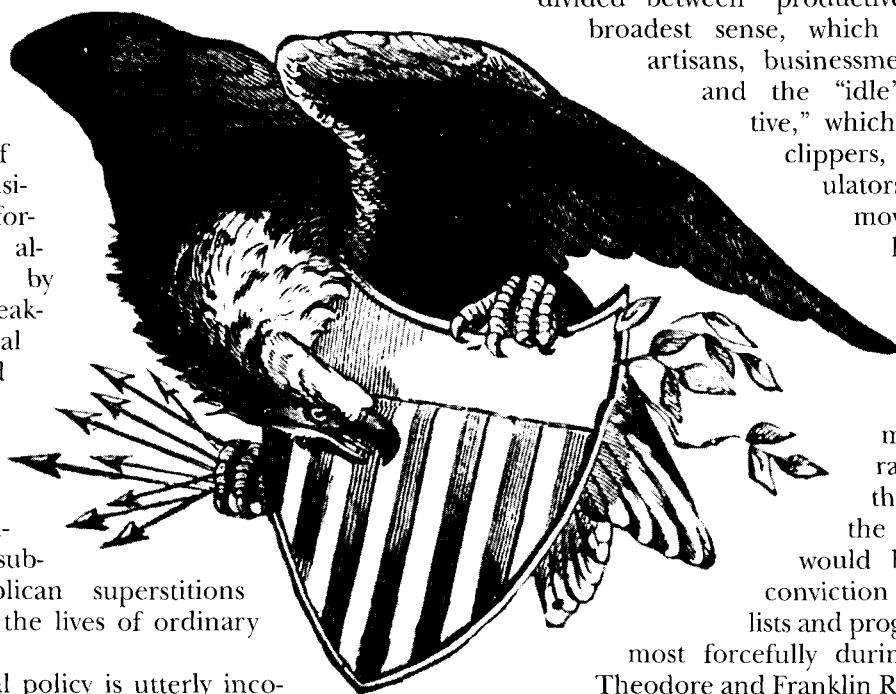
III.

We have found that, among Washington's policy elite, describing oneself as a populist or a nationalist invites scorn and derision. Both terms, however, describe political traditions with roots deep in the American past. Populism was the name of a movement that lasted only from about 1886 to 1896, but populist themes emanate from the country's founding and have resonated through the twentieth century. Populism has been the classic movement of America's middle class—from its small farmers of the nineteenth century to its small businessmen and industrial workers of the twentieth. Populists saw society divided between "productive" workers in the broadest sense, which included farmers, artisans, businessmen and merchants, and the "idle" and "unproductive," which included coupon-clippers, vagrants and speculators. Like all political movements, populism has had its dark side. Under the populist banner, politicians have pushed everything from arcane monetary schemes to racial segregation to the expropriation of the rich. But what we would build upon is the conviction shared by populists and progressives—expressed most forcefully during this century by Theodore and Franklin Roosevelt, Harry Truman and Lyndon Johnson—that what government does must be judged by whether it benefits the great productive middle of our society.

Nationalism, too, has had its dark side, not just in Europe but also in America. Nativism was an important strain in American politics during the 1850s and the 1920s and is recurring again. But there is a constructive and inclusive current of American nationalism that runs from Alexander Hamilton through Abraham Lincoln and Theodore Roosevelt. It emphasizes not the exclusion of foreigners, but rather the unification of Americans of different regions, classes, races and ethnic groups around a common national identity. It stands opposed not only to nativism, but also to today's multiculturalism and economic or strategic globalism.

We draw our version of American nationalism from Theodore Roosevelt's "New Nationalism," which was inspired in part by Herbert Croly, author of *The Promise of American Life* (1909), and founder of this magazine.

continued on page 24



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"The American people," Roosevelt declared in 1910, "are right in demanding that New Nationalism, without which we cannot hope to deal with our new problems. The New Nationalism puts the national need above sectional or personal advantage."

Roosevelt defined his "New Nationalism" on an analogy with Lincoln's nationalism of 1860. Where Lincoln was concerned with the threat of a nation half-slave and half-free and divided between North and South, Roosevelt was concerned with the conflict between capital and labor and, secondarily, with the lingering sectional divisions between North and South and East and West. In the growing class conflict of the period, he saw the prospect of a new civil war that would divide America and destroy the nation. Roosevelt was not a socialist: his solution was not to eliminate capital, but to tame and regulate it so that it could coexist harmoniously with labor. But Roosevelt also incorporated a central idea of Lincoln and of populism: that, in Lincoln's words, "labor"—defined broadly in nineteenth-century terms of productive workers—"is prior to, and independent of, capital."

America today faces a situation roughly analogous to the one Roosevelt and the progressives faced. Workers are not threatening to man the barricades against capitalists, but society is divided into mutually hostile camps: cities against suburbs, Northeast against Sunbelt, black against white. Particularly disturbing is the growing division along class lines—between a white overclass and an increasingly redundant and insecure working class in constant fear of tumbling into the underclass. It's not so much the Balkanization as the Brazilianization of America, characterized by the increasing withdrawal of the white overclass into its own barricaded nation-within-a-nation, a world of private neighborhoods, private schools, private police and even private roads, walled off from the spreading squalor beyond. The goal of a new nationalism today is to forestall these looming divisions in American society.

Roosevelt also had a distinct idea of the American nation that differed from the right and left of his time. On the right, nativists argued that the American nation was defined by the Anglo-Saxon or Germanic race and the Protestant religion. On the left, cultural pluralists such as Horace Kallen and Randolph Bourne argued that the United States was, or should be, a federation of culturally distinct "nationalities"—Anglo-Americans, German-Americans, Italian-Americans—sharing only a common framework of institutions. Theodore Roosevelt and like-minded progressives rejected both nativism and cultural pluralism in favor of the idea of the "melting pot" (the popular play of that name was dedicated to Roosevelt).

In foreign policy, Roosevelt wanted the United States to be able to exercise military power commensurate with its economic wealth. Roosevelt's principal foes were isolationists who believed that the United States did not need to play a role in the imperial conflicts that

were convulsing Europe, China and Africa. But after his death Roosevelt's allies such as Henry Cabot Lodge also opposed Woodrow Wilson's utopian concept of collective security. Roosevelt was what we would now call a national interest realist.

Just as Roosevelt and Croly drew upon Lincoln's antebellum nationalism, we would draw upon Roosevelt's effort in the Progressive Era to define a "new nationalism." That means, first and foremost, that we must discard the illusions created by America's brief career as a military and economic hegemon. America emerged from World War II in a position of economic and military supremacy that even nineteenth-century Great Britain had never enjoyed: the United States produced half of the world's goods; our manufacturers had no peers; and our military, bolstered by the atomic bomb, had enemies but no equals. The United States formed a military alliance against its principal rival, the Soviet Union, in which it assumed the costs of deterrence, equating the security of its NATO and Asian allies with its own. Similarly, in hope of eventually creating foreign demand for its own goods, it provided economic aid and open markets to its allies without demanding similar concessions in return. Such an unquestioning commitment to free trade is the luxury of hegemonic economic powers.

Cold war globalism, in defense and economics, was also accompanied by a redefinition of American national identity. Beginning in the 1950s, American leaders, who before 1945 had tended to view the United States as an Anglo-Saxon or Euro-American society, redefined the United States as a "nation of nations," a federation of ethnic and racial groups united only by democratic idealism. The multinational United States, it was said, could serve as a model for the United Nations and a federal Europe; America was what the Soviet Union claimed to be, a multinational federation united by progressive Enlightenment ideology. Though few Americans have ever thought of their country as anything other than a nation-state, this idea of the United States as a non-national or post-national society became a staple of cold war rhetoric on the part of politicians and pundits.

Over the past two decades, but particularly in the past five years, these three pillars of cold war American globalism—strategic, economic and cultural—have been crumbling. The cold war is over—replaced by the re-emergence of pre-World War II tensions in Asia and ethnic hatreds in Eastern Europe. Japan shows signs of its own resurgent nationalism, while a united Germany has assumed greater diplomatic independence. At the same time, the American people, with the mortal threat of Soviet communism removed, are in no mood to support American policing of the world on behalf of Europe and Japan, as public opposition to intervention in Somalia and the Balkans has shown.

The United States has also lost its unchallenged industrial supremacy. Since 1971 the United States has repeatedly run trade deficits—not only in energy prod-

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ucts, but also in manufacturing. While the world's nations have signed a new GATT treaty, they have not prevented the re-emergence of trade conflicts among the major economic powers. Now that the contest between capitalism and socialism has been settled, a new ideological contest is emerging between national variants of capitalism—American free-market radicalism, Japanese economic nationalism and German social-market capitalism.

The conception of the United States as a multinational democracy, epitomized by the multiculturalist movement, is also in retreat. Opposition to racial preferences and quotas represents a repudiation of the idea that the United States is a confederation of racial nationalities rather than a nation-state with a common culture. The backlash against escalating levels of Third World immigration reflects not just racism but genuine concerns about the displacement of the native-born working poor. Americans are sending a message: We Are Not the World.

Our challenge is to replace these outworn ideologies of cold war globalism with a politics that more accurately reflects our new situation. For that, like Theodore Roosevelt and Herbert Croly, we propose a "new nationalism."

IV.

The first pillar of this new nationalism is economic nationalism. We believe that a strategy of limited protection for developing industries was critical to America's industrialization in the nineteenth century, to the rebuilding of Western Europe and Japan after World War II and to the emergence of East Asian capitalism today. We believe that a one-sided commitment to free trade was absolutely appropriate to mid-nineteenth-century Britain and to post-World War II America. But in the late twentieth century, the United States is in a much more ambiguous position, still possessing the world's largest market, but also highly vulnerable to foreign competition in many industries and incapable of competing in several, including areas of consumer electronics. This is not a situation in which a strategy of either rampant protection or one-sided free trade is appropriate. Instead, we advocate that the United States encourage free trade in the majority of goods and services. At the same time, it should reserve the right to protect industries such as machine tools and semiconductors that are important to the country's well-being and the right to pursue managed trade negotiations with countries such as Japan and China that have proved resistant to open trading.

We have to adapt a similar posture toward American overseas investments. In the decades after World War II, the United States clearly benefited from the export of capital overseas. It helped rebuild countries into trading partners for the United States and also, in the case of Western European nations, reinforced their commitment to democracy and the Atlantic alliance. Capital investment abroad also spurred American exports of

technology. But since the early '70s, capital investment abroad has accelerated deindustrialization, which has deprived many American workers of the kind of blue-collar jobs by means of which previous generations worked their way up the economic ladder. The United States has to do something about this: America cannot export its poorer citizens as European countries have done. We should not try to impede technological change, but we must remove incentives created decades ago encouraging American firms to produce abroad.

Ultimately American economic policy must meet a single test: Does it, in the long run, tend to raise or depress the incomes of most Americans? A policy that tends to impoverish ordinary Americans is a failure, no matter what its alleged benefits are for U.S. corporations or for humanity as a whole. "I believe in shaping the ends of government to protect property as well as human welfare," Teddy Roosevelt told a Kansas audience in 1910. "Normally, and in the long run, the ends are the same; but whenever the alternative must be faced, I am for men and not for property." So are we.

The second pillar of today's new nationalism is national-interest realism in defense. We reject both indiscriminate retrenchment and indiscriminate commitment abroad. We favor a new defense policy tailored to promote concrete American security interests in the emerging multipolar world.

The isolationism of right-wingers such as Patrick Buchanan and Jesse Helms is even more of an anachronism in 1995 than it was in 1895. As America's relative share of world military power declines, participation in countervailing coalitions against potential hegemonies will become more, not less, important. In the next century, the United States may be surpassed as the world's largest economic power by an integrated Europe, or by a Chinese or Japanese-dominated pan-Asian bloc, even by a modernized India. As it did before World War II, the United States may have to help other powers prevent a hostile superpower or alliance from consolidating its control over vast resources; no wondrous weapons systems like SDI will ever eliminate the need for military allies.

In advocating that the United States pursue its national interests by the traditional means of a conventional great power, we reject the misleading description of the United States as "the world's only superpower." The disproportionate power of the United States relative to Western Europe and Japan was a passing phenomenon caused by World War II; notions of U.S. global hegemony were already anachronistic by 1973, as Nixon and Henry Kissinger recognized. Today those who talk about a "unipolar world" believe that, by policing the turbulent Third World regions bordering Europe and Japan, the United States can preserve its cold war dominance. But American voters will not permit the United States to act as the security guard for the Europeans and East Asians and the latter will be equally unwilling to forgo pursuing independent military strategies. That's how it should be: we fought two world

wars and the cold war in order to prevent hostile powers from dominating these areas; our objective was not to achieve domination ourselves.

The third pillar of the new nationalism is a nation-uniting approach to social policy. We think the goal of social policy should be to reduce the growing disparity among economic classes. While we don't believe absolute equality is possible or desirable, we share the faith of populists and progressives that American democracy is incompatible with huge disparities in wealth and power. We also believe the goal of social policy should be to carry forward and complete the movement toward equal rights in our society by eliminating discrimination based on race, gender and sexual orientation. But this must be pursued with an understanding that we seek equality as citizens of the same nation.

Our concept of America as a nation is at odds with the prevailing views on the right and the left. On the right today, nativists such as Buchanan and anti-immigration theorist Peter Brimelow argue that the United States must preserve its European "ethnic core." Charles Murray and Richard Herrnstein warn in *The Bell Curve* about the supposed "dysgenic" effects of immigration by blacks and Latinos on the gene pool, while members of the religious right warn that American people must preserve the United States' identity as a "Christian" or "Judeo-Christian" nation. On the left, multiculturalists view America not as a nation but as a collection of different cultures, a kind of miniature U.N. The multiculturalists want to use quotas, subsidies or even reparations to achieve economic and political parity with the abstract category of white men for each of the supposed "nations" of America—blacks, Hispanics, Asians, even women of all races and homosexuals of all races and both sexes. These policies end up exacerbating the divisions among "nations" while failing to make them more equal. We reject both nativism and multiculturalism.

The new nationalism differs from multiculturalism in holding that there is an American nation; it differs from nativism by defining that nation in terms of a common vernacular culture rather than race or religion. The political corollary of Roosevelt's transracial melting-pot ideal is a revival of the color-blind integrationism of the early civil rights revolution—a revolution opposed by the racists of the right, and betrayed by the racists of the left. We believe that government-coerced tokenism

should be repudiated, in favor of race-neutral programs, either means-tested or universal, that seek to integrate the disadvantaged of all races into the mainstream of American economic and social life.

V.

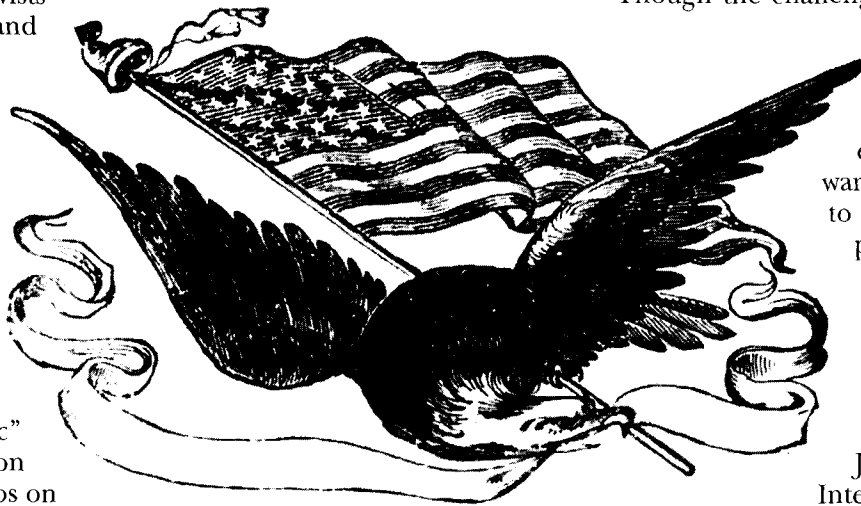
In *The Promise of American Life*, the founding editor of this magazine wrote, "There comes a time in the history of every nation, when its independence of spirit vanishes, unless it emancipates itself in some measure from its traditional illusions; and that time is fast approaching for the American people. They must either seize the chance of a better future, or else become a nation which is satisfied in spirit merely to repeat indefinitely the monotonous measures of its own past." Abraham Lincoln made the same point more succinctly in 1862. "As our case is new, so we must think anew, and act anew. We must disenthrall ourselves, and then we shall save our country."

Though the challenges we face today are

different, the illusions that tempt us are the same as those that earlier nationalists warned against. It's facile to believe we can dispense with large-scale governmental and economic organization and hope that a paradise of free individuals—the family farmers of William Jennings Bryan or the Internet entrepreneurs of the Tofflers—will spring up of its

own accord. It's naïve to hold that, in our international affairs, power politics is un-American, or has been rendered obsolete by commerce and spreading enlightenment. It is a delusion (shared by Andrew Carnegie and William Bennett) to hold that the problems facing American society can be addressed by individual moral reformation, rather than by the redesign of our institutions and the rethinking of our strategies.

Can we meet these challenges? In the decades between Lincoln and Theodore Roosevelt, the country floundered as badly as it has during the last few decades. Their mountebanks were no different from ours; their corruption was even more pervasive; and their sense of political paralysis even more profound. Still, they were able to think and act anew. As we prepare to enter the next century, we believe that we are on the verge of a similar era of national renewal. Those of us who believed that we had missed out on the great struggles to shape the fate of the American nation were mistaken. The end of the American century draws near; but the promise of the American nation remains to be fulfilled. •



BOOKS & The Arts

Stanley Kauffmann on Films

Faraway Lives

In a fast year, New Zealand produces seven feature films. Last year there were only three, but two of them flourished. *Heavenly Creatures*, based on a 1954 murder case, has been a global success. (I thought it painfully heavy-handed.) The other success, the biggest domestic hit in New Zealand history and a festival sparkler, is *Once Were Warriors* (Fine Line). Just arrived here, it's a mixture of talent and routine.

First, the actors, all of whom are Maori. When well-acted films come out of a culture with an unfamiliar acting tradition, I'm always fascinated as to where the director found his cast. Four years ago we got a trio of films by young American black directors, all of ability, but I wondered about the casts. Where had middle-aged American black actors found the chance in this country to develop their talents to this degree? The same question arises with the Maori people in *Once Were Warriors*.

Reference books helped. First, the New Zealand theater in general, of which word reaches here occasionally, is much more active than we might have thought, and so is their television. Second, and more pertinent, Maori theater is a vital activity, with an antiracist political content that links this new film with it. At least it's clear that this film's cast, young and otherwise, grew up with examples and opportunities.

The film is about domestic violence in a Maori family in Auckland, violence provoked by a hard-drinking, beefy husband and father. Temuera Morrison is scarily violent in the role, though his tantrums preceding the flying fists

sometimes seem a bit fabricated. But Rena Owen, as his wife, has delicacy and resolve. Even more startlingly fine is Mamaengaroa Kerr-Bell as her 13-year-old daughter, and the other adolescents in the film are equally sensitive and precise. Good performances always owe something to the director, but Lee Tamahori, the director here, deserves special recognition for his work with these young people.

Everyone, director and cast, had something of an upward slog because of the screenplay. It was adapted by the Maori playwright Riwia Brown from a novel by Alan Duff, and once we get the setting and the characters—we could almost say the pattern—we know more or less what the rest will be. It's a working-class home. Morrison is a warm-hearted father when sober and uncontradicted. His wife loves him despite the full-swing punches he delivers when he's drunk and disobeyed. He promises much, loafs, draws his dole money, drinks oceans of beer with pals

and brings them home to party. The story has been told in many settings—the husband whose demands for authority increase proportionally with his frustrations and drinking. (One interesting point is the proximity of Maori “roots.” Only a few hours away is the old Maori culture. Much is made of it as a source of pride for this ghettoized urban family—they once were warriors—and of Maori life as a possible place of return.)

Yet familiar as the pattern is—we recognize the Lost-My-Job-Scene, the Party Scene, the Morning After Scene—the film holds because of the acting and because it functions as travelogue. Tamahori opens with a gorgeous shot of landscape; then the camera pans, and we see that we have been looking at a billboard, which is alongside a crowded six-lane freeway with the usual grunge along its borders. We almost sigh with relief: we're not going to see a series of calendar shots, we're going to see something of veritable Kiwi life. (New Zealand's own term for itself.)

A further film about this particular kind of life and event is bound to be less interesting, but besides the matters noted above, *Once Were Warriors* is incidentally a documentary about the spread of American pop culture: the motorcycles, the leather, the rock, the Wesley Snipes-Woody Harrelson poster on the daughter's bedroom wall. (Only the wild Maori tattoos on the leather boys seem indigenous.) Pax vobiscum. Pax Americana, that is.

The landscape—the real thing, not a billboard—is the chief attraction in *Before the Rain* (Gramercy). It's a three-part film. Part Two is set in London, but Parts One and Three are in Macedonia, mostly on the shore of a mountain lake, with a small church on a ledge over the water and a full moon patrolling at night. As shot by Manuel Teran, superb.

The picture is less so as a whole. It's a first feature, written and directed by Milcho Manchevski. (I must note that it took first prize at the last Venice festival.)

FILMS WORTH SEEING

Martha and I. Jiří Weiss, writer and director, tells a richly atmospheric story of the Czechoslovakia he knew before World War II—a Jewish youth, his life-loving uncle and his uncle's German wife. Memorable. (Reviewed 3/13/95) **Mina Tannenbaum.** Another Jewish family—this time in postwar Paris. Mina grows up closely knit with her friend Ethel. The growing-up takes moving, wry forms. Charming directed by its author, Martine Dugowson. (3/6/95) **Through the Olive Trees.** This Iranian account of a laconic courtship enchants with its very quietness—even though it takes place during the making of a film. The director, Abbas Kiarostami, is well worth knowing. (3/20/95) **Window to Paris.** A witty fantasy from Russia. Someone discovers a window in St. Petersburg that opens up into central Paris. Several kinds of joy and havoc result. (2/27/95)—SK

Manchevski, a Macedonian native, had his film education in America and has spent considerable time in New York, but his American education has only empowered him to make a film replete with Eastern European clichés. Picturesque posings; laconic utterance; tacit understanding among friends; and that stock European hero, the grizzle-bearded fellow who is tacitly Very Real. He drinks and eats hard, he loves hard, he treasures children and he hates fraud.

He doesn't arrive until Part Two: a world-famous photographer whose agency is in London, where of course an adoring woman awaits him. But he is sick of fame and fortune and wants to go home. There he finds strife among his people, the Christian Macedonians and the Muslim Albanians. In London we have seen an episode of senseless carnage in a chic restaurant—an irritated madman shoots up the place. At home, the hero finds more carnage. His old girlfriend and schoolmate, now a widow, is Muslim. Hence the rest of the story. It all ends with the widow's pregnant daughter and a young priest, which is just where Part One began.

This off-the-shelf hollow cyclical pattern fits perfectly a film fraught with leaden symbolism, pseudo-profundities and arbitrary tragedy. (One millimeter more over the edge and the piece would be self-satirical.) The whole enterprise is

scented with youthful sincerity. Manchevski certainly is concerned about his country and wants to present its troubles, but his work is warped by cinematic platitude, aggravated by a somewhat premature conviction of genius.

Lamb (Capitol) arrives here courtesy of *Schindler's List*, so to speak. *Lamb* was made in Ireland and England in 1985 and presumably would not have been imported now except for the subsequent success of its star, Liam Neeson. Minor though this new-old picture is, we can be glad of the chance to see earlier work by this exceptional actor.

Neeson plays Brother Michael Lamb, who is on the staff of a Catholic home for boys in Galway. Conjoining in his life are loss of faith, a dislike of the home, a moderate inheritance from his lately deceased father and an affection for a troublesome boy who has just entered the home. Neeson runs away from the home and, purely out of paternal feeling, takes the boy with him.

The screenplay gives Neeson a hard time. He has to interest us in a man, supposedly intelligent, who (a) doesn't foresee that he'll run out of money, and (b) doesn't foresee that the police will be after him. But Neeson, as ruggedly handsome as ever and more Irish than usual, gives *Lamb* some incandescent touches of truth. A real actor. •

The Leveling Wind

BY ROBERT ALTER

The Tunnel by William H. Gass

(Knopf, 652 pp., \$30)

William Gass is a critic and a professor of philosophy at Washington University in St. Louis and the author of three volumes of fiction, each of which is intelligent and well-crafted but somehow less than memorable. For three decades, he has been laboring over a vast novel about the frustrations of private life in an age of historical enormities. Here is the finished product. Some may seize on it as a postmodern masterpiece, but it is a bloated monster of a book. (At 400,000 words, it is almost one-third longer than Joyce's *Ulysses*.) The bloat is a consequence of sheer adipose verbosity and an unremitting condition of moral and intellectual flatulence. Lest

this last description seem gratuitously mean, let me quickly note that Gass's narrator is himself obsessed with farting; history-writing, politics and sex are all repeatedly reduced to a bursting bubble of malodorous gas. At one point Gass's text is actually embellished with a diagram of four farts, labeled from F to T.

Gass's real achievement is to have produced a complete compendium of the vices of postmodern writing. His narrator, William Kohler, is a professor of history at a Midwestern university, who records in a secret diary his ruminations about his life, about his colleagues and (very intermittently) about the Nazi genocide, after having completed a major study called *Guilt and Innocence in Hitler's*

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Germany. The time of writing is the 1960s, when Kohler is in his 50s. An American of German ancestry, he was a student in Germany during the 1930s, where he observed Kristallnacht and was actually drawn into joining the rioters. He served with the American Army in Europe during the war, and he was present at the Nuremberg trials.

His private life is an unending tale of domestic disaster and inner revulsion. His father was distant and judgmental, his mother a hopeless alcoholic. His wife, who has become immensely fat, despises him, and he loathes her. His feelings for his two adolescent sons oscillate between impatience and contempt. He has a fleeting erotic idyll with a local salesgirl, but after a summer of passion she ditches him, telling him—with good warrant, most readers will feel—that he has a revolting mind. There are two other amorous attachments from his past that are mentioned: a sinister cabaret singer in Germany who turns out to have been involved in barbaric Nazi acts, and a student, who is only required, in a strictly genital sense, to pay lip service.

But such a synopsis makes *The Tunnel* sound much more like a conventional narrative than it really is. Gass's manifest aim is to subvert the linear progression of narrative. This is a disposition shared with many twentieth-century novelists, beginning with the pioneering modernists who emerged just before World War I; but in Gass's book the subversion of narrative is associated with a whole constellation of aesthetic, moral, political and historiosophical biases that are distinctively postmodern.

From its very beginning, the novel adopts a variety of devices to disrupt the realist illusion. Gass's narrator is an inscriber of what John Barth once designated "the literature of exhaustion." Professorial to the marrow, he inhabits a library, buckles under the weight of the innumerable volumes that he carries in his head, from Plato and Pascal to Kleist, Proust and Rilke. His own pages are awash with citations and references, with imitations or parodies of earlier texts. The line between reality and textuality blurs, and everything turns into text.

It is hardly surprising, therefore, that we should be constantly reminded by Gass of the textual artifice of the words that we are reading. Much of this is done typographically. There are sketches, cartoons, diagrams, printer's symbols, a dozen varieties of typefaces. All this is vaguely reminiscent of *Tristram Shandy*, though Sterne handled such visual techniques with wit and point. For a while it seems as though the novel will be

650 pages of alienation effect. By the middle of the book, however, Gass himself appears to tire of the typographic high jinks; and the last half is a much closer approximation of a continuous realistic narrative, chiefly concentrated on the woes of Kohler's childhood and marriage.

The *Tunnel* is equally postmodern in its transgression of the limits of structure. Where modernist novels that break with traditional linear narration, such as *Ulysses*, *The Sound and the Fury* and *Petersburg*, replace it with an elaborate structure of recurring motifs and other kinds of formal symmetries and antitheses, the procedure in *The Tunnel* is loose, unimpeded, free-associative flow. The principle of artful selection is renounced. The basic rhetorical form of the novel is the run-on catalog. If the narrator begins to describe what he does when he gets up in the morning, we get: matinal defecation with all the consequent motions and sensations of bottom-wiping; washing of the face; tooth-brushing, stroke by stroke; shaving, and so forth, for seven or eight numbing pages. If he recalls a visit to an ice cream parlor as a child, every last flavor concocted on the premises must be inventoried. The same deployment of unfocused accumulation of words, items, images and ideas is evident when Kohler is not narrating but lucubrating about such topics as sex, fascism, bigotry, conjugal hostility, academia and modern history.

The mingling of styles, the conjoining of high and low, which critics such as Bakhtin and Auerbach saw as the fulfillment of the modern novel, is pushed here to an extreme and banal limit. A general assault on aesthetic hierarchies is undertaken. No restraint of decorum is allowed; there is no subject about which the narrator is not both flippant and obscene. The novel bristles with remarks that combine aggressive rudeness with a kind of willed stupidity, such as this comment on Proust: "O sure, we know why Proust wrote: to justify one man's sordid sodomate ways to the interested asses of other men."

And mass murder itself is not exempt from such treatment. A series of limericks about Auschwitz is strung through the novel, of which this is the first, and not even the worst:

There once was a camp called Auschwitz
where the Germans continued their
Jew-blitz.

Their aim was the same
if they shot, gassed, or maimed;
while gold was reclaimed
from the teeth that remained,
and they sold off the hair for a few bits.

Though this particular piece of appalling doggerel is attributed to a colleague of Kohler's who is a compulsive limericker, elsewhere the narrator cuts his own limericks from the same shoddy cloth, and the other poems that he inserts into his narrative are no better.

The obliteration of aesthetic distinctions has an obvious moral corollary; and it is this leveling of values that is the truly troubling feature of Gass's novel. At one point Culp, the narrator's compulsive colleague, offers a defense of the limerick as the perfect postmodern form, serving the purpose "to raunchify, to subvert everything, to pollute the pollutants, explode the exploded, trash the trash.... It is all surface.... There's no inside however long or far you travel on it, no within, no deep." This may serve as a credo for the book as a whole.

Gass has written an immense novel in which everything is deliberately reduced to the flattest surface. This generalization of the historian-narrator about history and poetry is characteristic of the way in which all realms of experience are handled:

Cancel Clio, cross out sweet Calliope, for history's been buggered by ideology, and farts its facts in an odorous cloud, while poets have no breath whatever, are in another business presently, where Parnassus is a pastry, and produce their poems promptly on request like short-order cooks shake forth a batch of fries.

The sentence tumbles from cynicism to nonsense, chiefly driven by the energy of alliteration, which suffuses the whole style of the novel, flaunting "like" for "as" (actually the source of a momentary confusion) as a grammatical index of its unrepentant mixture of styles.

The buggering and the farting reflect the general reduction of all aspects of human life to lower-body functions and insistently unpleasant representations of the sexual organs. Sex itself is rarely, in this novel, erotic. It is repeatedly and childishly scatological, dissolving into an imagery of slime, scum, smegma, scuz and snot (the infernal alliteration, again). And slime is, in turn, the narrator's metaphor for everything: "Slowly slime is covering the earth, more of it made every day—more whiny people, more filthy thoughts, crummy plans, cruddy things, contemptible actions—multiplying like evil spores."

The difference between Gentile and Jew is figured, for half a dozen pages at a time, in elaborate descriptions of the distended male member, with foreskin and without. And the murder of 6 million Jews is, in the context that Gass creates, not so much horrifying as redundant,

because it is merely a massive instance of the slimy nastiness of all things human: "No matter what you do or how you live, whether you are good, bad, or indifferently dull, you die. That's the master race's Message.... Death owns everything, especially our souls, source of the foulness we smelled when we tried to drive the Doggod's goat out."

Transient love, long gone by the time of the narration, may afford some respite or consolation, but it, too, cannot escape the general foulness of mortal existence: "Orgasms pass more quickly than most pleasures. Less than a length of licorice. Only illusions remain." Note that love itself is reduced to orgasms, as repeatedly in the novel the joining of lovers' bodies proves to be only a temporary and excessively complicated substitute for masturbation, since in the narrator's leveling perspective the swelling of the organ and the expelling of seed are the heart of the matter. This is not pessimism, this is adolescence.

If this fictional encyclopedia of postmodern stances is, in sum, not meant to proclaim the end of history, it surely seeks to announce the end of moral history, denying the possibility of making consequential distinctions between, or meaningful rankings of, moral or aesthetic values. There is no within: murderer and victim, lover and onanist, altruist and bigot, dissolve into the same ineluctable slime.

Some readers of the novel may be inclined to defend its unrelenting nastiness as a variety of political criticism. William Kohler is certainly not William Gass, whatever the similarities of vocation, geographical location and physique. It is fair enough to say that Gass intends Kohler as a representative modern middling man seething with *ressentiment*. Thus he is meant to exhibit a subterranean bond with the Nazis. As was true for them, the frustrations of his private life express themselves in a spectrum of hostility toward whole classes of people—Jews, blacks, Italians, women. It is not surprising that he should heave a brick through a Jewish window on Kristallnacht, or that his book (the contents of which are never explained in detail) should argue for an ambiguous mixture of guilt and innocence in Nazi Germany—evidently, not much different from the guilt and the innocence that we all possess in our ordinary lives. Kohler can readily understand the allure of marching in the ranks beneath the swastika: "I would have backed a winning team, I would be wearing a damn fine uniform, I would be a little finger, sure, but in a big fist."

In keeping with this notion of identification, he proposes the founding of a Party of Disappointed People, duly providing sketches of possible flags and insignia. This idea of a neofascist movement, jauntily presented, is clearly meant to show that Nazism was not an aberrant moral monstrosity but a culminating manifestation of forces percolating through ordinary people in mass societies all the time. The ugliness with which we are treated, and with which we treat our spouses and children and colleagues and lovers, naturally seeks a grander theater of action. The fear and loathing of the conjugal bed and the departmental meeting-room seek outlets in landscapes of naked corpses and crematoria.

Something of this sort, I would infer, is the intended argument of Gass's book. But the intention fails on two serious accounts. First, the leveling, despairing, cynical, resentful worldview of William Kohler totally pervades the novel. There is no glimpse of a complication or an alternative, no implication—as there is, say, in *Notes from Underground*—of an antithesis. If Kohler is meant to be Gass's portrait of what Michael André Bernstein has called the "abject hero," the novel is committed with a vengeance to an encompassing imitative fallacy: abjection is the only perspective provided for

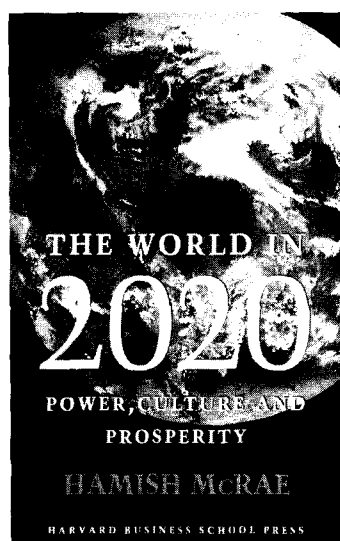
the comprehension of history, morality, politics and private life. The novel is itself abject. There is only darkness at the end of *The Tunnel*.

In this respect, a comparison between Gass and Céline is instructive. Céline's novels express a pervasive, authentic sense of rage against mankind, articulated with the energy and the inventiveness of genius, and he includes himself among his targets, and can be quite funny both about himself and the world. Gass is not a genius, which is not a crime; but more to the point, he approaches his dark materials without a real sense of comedy or a real sense of authenticity. The abjection of his hero seems less lived than written. It is an act of ventriloquism: behind the repulsive, potentially fascist narrator stands his critic, the novelist, presumably committed to humane, democratic values. But those values are nowhere intimated in the book, and what emerges is a kind of inadvertent complicity between author and protagonist. The supposedly critical novel becomes an enactment of bad faith.

It may be true enough that movements such as Nazism draw on feelings of resentment in the masses they attract, though the idea is not exactly a new one. But such feelings undergo a

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crucial, hideous transformation in the political realm, and not all private ugliness leads to murderousness or its moral equivalent. Gass is an obliterater of distinctions. He believes that a portrait of a man despising a wife who has become physically and emotionally abhorrent and denies him his connubial rights offers access into the mental and moral makeup of the contrivers of the gas chambers and the torchlit marchers drunk on slogans of *Blut und Erde*. Such connections between the personal and the political realms seem dangerously facile.

The image from which the title of the novel is taken reflects the intellectual confusion at the core of the book. The narrator begins, quite madly, to dig a tunnel in his basement, "you know," he explains, "to escape from the camp." The obvious idea is that married life has become a death trap, a concentration camp, and, like a desperate inmate marked for destruction, Kohler must try to save himself by scrabbling in the dirt, shovelful after painful shovelful, to work his way out.

Of course, there is a troubling incoher-

ence in the fact that the narrator who repeatedly identifies himself with the Nazis should in this recurrent instance identify himself with their victims. What is more revolting, however, is the violent yoking of heterogeneous realms. Like Sylvia Plath's use of Auschwitz in "Daddy," this is an exploitation of the imagery of the death camps to represent out of all proportion the animosities of private life. Domestic rage, intimidation and resentment are terrible things, but they are not the moral or psychological equivalent of being herded into gas chambers and shoveled into furnaces. It is a little tiresome, at this late date in the history of writing about the Holocaust, to make this point again, but Gass's book demands it. The real obscenity of his novel is not its hideous language or its scatological imaginings, but its trivialization of the enormity of genocide by absorbing it into the nickel-and-dime nastiness that people perpetrate in everyday life.

ROBERT ALTER is the author most recently of *Necessary Angels* (Harvard University Press) and *Hebrew and Modernity* (Indiana University Press).

member of the Wall Street lawyers who made up the Eastern establishment. But there the similarity ends. A pipe-smoking raconteur whose booming laugh masked ruthless ambition, Allen Dulles was anything but a sourpuss. Incapable of holding a grudge, Dulles had an emollient effect that smoothed his way up the escalator of success. He spent much of his time hobnobbing with millionaires, frequenting the Washington cocktail circuit and even bedding the Queen of Greece in his office. Dulles partly cultivated his urbane personality to set himself off from his dour sibling. But it was also a core part of his skill at deception.

Any biographer must penetrate the smoke screen that Dulles threw up to protect himself from scrutiny. Peter Grose has the necessary tools, and he has done a splendid job of presenting Dulles's complicated life in a clear and coherent fashion. An engaging writer, he has drawn on twenty years of research by Richard Harris Smith, who had intended to write this biography, as well as added his own materials, including interviews with Dulles's friends and associates. And yet, apart from an occasional Jeeves-like cough of discretion, Grose is remarkably reticent in assessing Dulles's career. He supplies the reader with minute details of his subject's personal life, but does not set him in the broader context of American foreign policy.

Dulles cannot be properly understood without understanding the extent to which he exploited his personality to shape intelligence work. Dulles was a confidence man and a crusader; and this mixture of guile and moralism made him a peculiarly American figure. The shadowy sphere of espionage was the only place where the actions of the cold war actually matched its rhetoric, and it was tailor-made for Dulles. As the impresario of the old boys' network that hunted the Soviet bear in what Dulles liked to call the "Great Game" (a copy of Kipling's *Kim* lay by his bed when he died in 1969), Dulles cloaked himself in mystery and power. The most nagging ambiguity about this ambiguous figure, however, concerns the significance of his contribution to the winning of the cold war.

Born on April 7, 1893, into the family of a Presbyterian minister in the little town of Watertown, New York, Dulles was groomed for public service. His father instilled in him a stern sense of Christian duty and obligation. As a boy, he spent winters in the Washington salon of his grandfather, John W. Foster, who initiated the use of military attachés for intelligence-gathering as secretary of state under Benjamin Harrison, and summers with Robert "Uncle Bertie"

The Old Boy at War

BY JACOB HEILBRUNN

Gentleman Spy: The Life of Allen Dulles by Peter Grose

(Houghton Mifflin, 641 pp., \$30)

In November 1917, more than 100 academics and government officials secretly began meeting behind guarded doors at the American Geographical Society in New York. Led by the 28-year-old journalist Walter Lippmann, the clandestine group feverishly drew up plans for an equitable European postwar settlement in the wake of the Bolshevik coup. Woodrow Wilson had created, with his adviser Colonel House, the first modern American intelligence unit. It was called the Inquiry.

The Inquiry was a bust. Wilson ended up paying no attention to it, or to any of his advisers at Versailles; and a disillusioned Lippmann stalked off to THE NEW REPUBLIC before the signing ceremony. But the intelligence legacy left by the president who championed open diplomacy would not go away. The Inquiry, which would spawn the Council on Foreign Relations in 1921, forged a perma-

nent link between espionage and the budding American foreign policy establishment. To an elite caste haunted by the memories of public diplomacy at Versailles, nothing could be more enticing than a government organization that offered the chance to conduct foreign policy covertly.

No one exemplified this ethos better than Allen Welsh Dulles. Dulles, who first made his mark at Versailles in intelligence work, was the longest-serving director in the history of the CIA. Drawing on his formative experiences in World War I, he became a spy for the World War II Office of Strategic Services (OSS) in Bern, Switzerland. After the war he became president of the Council on Foreign Relations and headed the CIA. Dubbed the "Great White Case Officer" by his subordinates, Dulles formed a kind of Cold War Inc. with his older brother, John Foster Dulles.

Like his brother, Dulles was a charter

Lansing, who was secretary of state under Wilson. At the age of 7 Dulles even made his first foray into publishing, with a twenty-six-page book denouncing British imperialism in the Boer War ("She is all the time picking into little countries"). His proud grandfather distributed it and it may still be found in major libraries.

Following in his brother's footsteps, Dulles entered Princeton in 1910. But he did not follow Foster's study habits; Dulles's charm made him one of the most popular members of the class of 1914 and he indulged in a life of fun-loving ease with classmates such as James Forrestal, the future secretary of defense, and the lordly Ferdinand Eberstadt. The former stronghold of Presbyterian orthodoxy did leave one serious mark. When Wilson exchanged the presidency of Princeton for the presidency of the United States, Dulles traveled to Washington for the inaugural speech and was captivated by its internationalist message. It presented him with the occasion to combine the missionary impulses he had imbibed from his father with politics.

Upon graduation in 1914, Dulles seized upon the offer of an alumnus to teach and to proselytize in the Orient. Bouncing around the continent for a year, he taught English at Ewing Christian College in Allahabad, India, and distributed Bibles in China. A year later he returned to Watertown at loose ends and gratefully accepted Uncle Bertie's offer to join the State Department. Dulles could not have joined at a more opportune moment. As the Great War raged, he was posted in 1916 to Vienna, where he inhaled a whiff of the decaying Hapsburg empire, then to Bern, Switzerland, as third secretary of the American mission.

Bern made Dulles. Swirling with East European refugees, spies and politicians, it gave him a taste for intrigue that he never lost. Dulles began running networks of Czechs and Yugoslavs out of the U.S. Embassy. He warned the State Department in 1918 that it was essential to study the "problem of nationalities and to determine where justice lies in the various claims of the European races and nations." This was the conundrum that preoccupied him all his life.

One person who was impressed by Dulles's reports was Lippmann. As the Inquiry veterans and State Department officials piled into Paris after the Armistice in November 1918, Lippmann placed Dulles's name at the top of government lists as the best-informed man on central Europe. Working as an assistant to Charles Whitney Seymour, the

Inquiry member and Yale historian who went on to funnel Yalies to the CIA in the 1950s, Dulles began supervising American agents roaming around the Balkans. Dulles recognized that with the collapse of the Hapsburg empire the traditional bulwark against Russian expansionism had disappeared. America had to replace it. According to Grose, "he argued that the means to confront Bolshevism need not be massive, just a small nucleus of armed professionals to bolster indigenous democratic forces." His cold war was beginning to take shape.

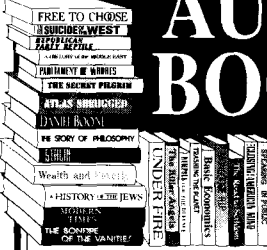
Once Wilson signed the peace treaty, however, Dulles's career went into a deep freeze. Bern, Versailles and a stint in Berlin had transformed him from a clubbable American into a cosmopolitan character who was as comfortable moving among the international political elite as setting up a demimondaine for himself in an apartment in Montparnasse. America's retreat into isolationism gave his future a murkier cast. And an impulsive marriage in October, 1920 to the New York socialite Clover Todd did not help matters. Grose perceptively notes that "Clover, with her airy sensitivity and insouciance, found lasting meaning in every encounter; Allen's personality was intellectual at base, leavened only by a successfully cultivated charm to serve only the purposes of the moment."

Dulles was constitutionally incapable of remaining faithful to any woman, but he was stuck with a wife and children. He needed money. The State Department, then an effete service that relied on bachelors to keep costs down, could not provide it. On his return to Washington, where he served as chief of the Mideast Affairs division, Dulles signed up on his brother's urging for night classes at the George Washington University Law School. In September, 1926 he resigned from the foreign service, and Foster took him on at his New York law firm, Sullivan & Cromwell.

While his younger brother flitted about Europe, Foster had earned millions on Wall Street. Now he kept his little brother under his thumb. Dulles worked on no serious cases, and his own children recalled their parents' fear of "imposing Uncle Foster, whose presence in the house" created "something like dread." Dulles even shaved off his little mustache so as to more closely resemble Foster. His real job at Sullivan & Cromwell was to put his government connections at the service of the firm. Sullivan & Cromwell, which boasted of its "unusual and diversified means of obtaining information," was far more than a law firm. New York had supplanted London as

the financial capital of the world, and Sullivan & Cromwell constituted a nexus of international finance representing mammoth trusts, corporations and cartels. During the 1920s finance assumed a particularly significant role as the reparations and debts of World War I created booms and busts in capital markets that made and broke central European regimes. Dulles had become familiar with high-wire diplomacy; working at the largest law firm in the world, he began to understand power.

Drawing on his service in Berlin in the early 1920s, Dulles devoted the lion's

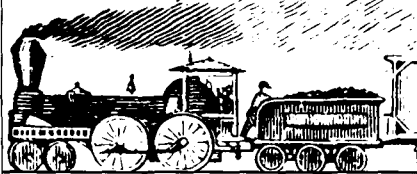


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share of his efforts to representing German businesses intent on circumventing restrictions on capital flows and rearmament. Who better to assist the Germans evade the more onerous provisions of the Versailles Treaty than the man who had helped to draft them? Grose, who pays wholly inadequate attention to Dulles's shady dealings with the German elite, does not mention that he assisted I.G. Farben and other German corporations in bypassing export controls and shipping the German Army illegal explosives. Dulles also served as general counsel for J. Henry Schroeder, New York, whose Hamburg branch backed Himmler financially. Consorting with the Cliveden appeasement set in England, Dulles declared that the United States had no interest in "fights over oppressed races and lost causes." So extensive were his German connections that Dulles even secured a private audience with the Führer in April 1933. He wrote his wife that the meeting had been "long and interesting" and told colleagues he was "rather impressed with [Goebbels's] sincerity and frankness."

Both the Dulles brothers were shaped by their social backgrounds in dealing with Nazi Germany. They raised themselves above ordinary standards of morality, dealing from elite to elite and looking down upon the hurly-burly of democratic politics. It was an attitude that Allen Dulles carried over into the CIA. In 1935, after Dulles visited Berlin and returned with a "sinister impression," he began to adopt a more cautious stance toward the Nazis than his brother, who blathered on about Hitler's impressive rise from "humble beginnings." (Grose has even unearthed an astonishing memorandum circulated by Foster after Pearl Harbor, in which he informed members of the firm that their old jobs were not guaranteed if they enlisted.) Influenced by his old Princeton buddy Hamilton Fish Armstrong, who was editor of *Foreign Affairs*, Dulles started to make the case for American responsibility in world affairs. In May 1941, he addressed Republican leaders,

warning that it was "vain" to think of a "clear and happy destiny for us alone, after an Axis victory."

For war offered an out. Dulles thrived on crisis. He was desperate to flee the ties that bound him to New York—the firm, his brother, his wife and his children. In 1940, William "Wild Bill" Donovan, the World War I hero, New York lawyer and founder of the OSS, hired Dulles to establish a secret intelligence unit in New York. An exhilarated Dulles began cultivating German émigrés as potential assets for an intelligence network.



DRAWING BY VINT LAWRENCE FOR THE NEW REPUBLIC

After Pearl Harbor, Donovan, who regarded Dulles as a poor administrator, arranged his transfer back to his old stomping grounds in Bern.

Slipping into neutral Switzerland on November 9, 1942, just as the Allied landing in North Africa prompted the Nazis to cut off access from Vichy France to Switzerland, Dulles was in his element. For twenty-two months, until the invasion of Normandy, he was sealed off in Bern. Despite its outward placidity, Switzerland's location in the center of Europe meant that Bern was swarming with spies from all over Europe. It was in this hothouse atmosphere that Dulles

faced the daunting challenge of building up an intelligence force from scratch to pierce the Third Reich.

Dulles, an expert at self-reinvention, began by remodeling himself. He traded in the affable dignity of the Wall Street lawyer for a tweedy sports jacket, flannel trousers and fedora. "This was the persona," says Grose, "that would stay with Dulles for the rest of his life." Dulles installed himself in a seventeenth-century mansion and collected one of the oddest salons in the history of wartime intelligence, consisting of various paramours, Prussian aristocrats and S.S. officers. He took care to have a fireplace burning at all times, mindful, he later recounted, of the "subtle influence in a wood fire which makes people feel at ease and less inhibited in their conversation." With his donnish air of abstraction, observed one American colleague, he could conjure up "just the right key to appear sympathique to any character who might be of use."

With his flair for publicity, Dulles did not attempt to hide his presence. On the contrary, he flaunted it. An envious British colleague carped that he "was like a man with a big bell, who rang it to attract attention, saying 'I've got plenty of money and I'm willing to buy information.'" Aware that he could not send trained agents into Nazi Germany, Dulles had shrewdly determined that he would have to rely on the numerous German expatriates and officials living in Switzerland who might be prepared to cooperate with an inquisitive American. They had to know who he was. Too much secrecy would be as fatal as too little. Operating on a far grander scale than he could have imagined in World War I, Dulles ended up running spy networks in Germany, Italy, France, Hungary and Yugoslavia.

His first two finds were Gero von Schulze-Gaevernitz, a German-born American citizen, investment banker and playboy living in Bern, who became a full-time executive officer for Dulles, and the hulking Prussian aristocrat Hans

Bernd Giesevis, who was vice consul in Bern and a member of German military intelligence. Both had extensive contacts with the underground resistance to Hitler. An old-fashioned nationalist, Giesevis had been authorized by Admiral Wilhelm Canaris, the head of German intelligence, to make contact with the Allies on behalf of the German Resistance. He supplied Dulles with tantalizing information on the incessant infighting among Hitler's camarilla.

But Dulles's most spectacular find was a plodding member of the German Foreign Office named Fritz Kolbe. Dulles code-named him "George Wood." Despite constant British fears that Dulles was being gulled, Wood supplied Dulles from 1943 to 1945 with a trove of documents on German military planning and internal intriguing. Bradley F. Smith noted in *The Shadow Warriors* (1982) that with Kolbe, Dulles scored the "most significant Allied secret agent triumph of the war." Dulles went on to establish a variety of contacts with the Resistance. He realized earlier than any other Western official that senior German foreign office and army officials were plotting to assassinate Hitler. When the July 20, 1944, conspiracy failed, Dulles's network was destroyed.

What Grose soft-pedals is that Dulles's desire to establish contacts with the German Resistance was spurred by the conviction that the Soviet Union was even more of an enemy than Nazi Germany. The Resistance, such as it was, consisted of a mixed bag of nationalists, generals and aristocrats who desperately wanted guarantees that a successful assassination of Hitler would allow Germany to escape the terms of unconditional surrender propounded by Roosevelt at Casablanca in 1943. Much of the Resistance wanted to retain Poland, Austria and the Sudetenland as an anticommunist bulwark. Dulles agreed. Already on February 1, 1943, Dulles informed Washington that the United States should not punish Germany and Italy after the war or "a series of internal revolutions" that "would turn communist" would replace fascism. Dulles was fighting the cold war before it started.

In 1945 Dulles had become snagged in the looming East-West conflict. In his most famous exploit, known as "Operation Sunrise," Dulles attempted to arrange an early surrender of German forces based in northern Italy with the s.s. *Obergruppenführer* Karl Wolff. The surrender ended up coming only a few days before the collapse of the Third Reich. But Stalin became apoplectic over Dulles's dealings with the Nazis,

accusing Roosevelt of attempting to arrange a separate peace. As usual, Stalin's charges were paranoid nonsense. But Dulles's readiness to treat with high-ranking Nazis certainly foreshadowed the alacrity with which American intelligence scooped up Nazis during the cold war.

Not everyone was happy with Dulles's actions. In his brilliant *The Old Boys* (1992), Burton Hersh notes that "others in the oss—whose men had died under torture on the general's orders—were incensed." Grose lets Dulles off the hook. He notes that in 1949 Wolff was acquitted of war crimes "largely on testimonials from Allen and Gaevernitz," but later "documentary evidence came to light showing Wolff to be more knowledgeable about the death camps than he had let on." More knowledgeable? Hersh reveals that between July and September 1942 Wolff deported 300,000 Jews from the Warsaw ghetto to Auschwitz, writing to Himmler of his "special joy now that five thousand members of the Chosen People are going to Treblinka every day."

With the end of the war, Dulles's career was stalled. He had established his reputation as a mastery—British intelligence referred to him as our "Kohinoor," or crown jewel, and Churchill personally received him—but intelligence-gathering was no longer at a premium. Fearful of creating an "American Gestapo," Truman squelched any plans for a peacetime agency, abolishing the oss. Dulles returned to New York, where he rejoined the firm, was elected president of the Council on Foreign Relations and wrote a book called *Hitler's Underground*. But the book bombed and life on the Street remained intolerable. Once again war offered an escape route.

Like his establishment colleagues who had experienced the thrill of command during the war, Dulles was electrified by George Kennan's call in 1947 for combating communism whenever and wherever it might appear. Kennan's "X" article had a special bonus for Dulles. Few people at the time realized that Kennan placed a premium on using covert action rather than massive military force to check the Kremlin. Dulles did. The cold war, as Dulles put it, would be waged by "maneuver and pressure," not by direct battles.

Working with Forrestal and Kennan, Dulles drew up plans for a central intelligence agency. His testimony before the Senate helped sell Congress on the idea that passed the 1947 National Security Act authorizing the creation of the CIA. A year later, when Kennan established an Office of Policy Coordination to oversee

"propaganda, economic warfare, preventive direct action including sabotage, anti-sabotage, demolition and evacuation measures; subversion against hostile states including assistance to underground resistance movements, guerrillas and refugee liberation movements," covert action came into its own. Kennan, Forrestal and Dulles had laid the groundwork for everything from the funding of Nazis to penetrate the Iron Curtain to the Iran-contra affair.

After creating various anticommunist fronts in his capacity as president of the Council of Foreign Relations, Dulles officially joined the crusade in 1949 as an assistant to the head of the fledgling CIA, General Walter "Beedle" Smith. But the choleric Smith, a high school graduate who had worked his way up the ranks, mistrusted Dulles's upper-class charms and his capacity for judgment and self-restraint in exercising powers that went far beyond the normal bounds of accountability. It was not until Dwight Eisenhower's victory in 1952 that Dulles was able to give his buccaneering spirit free rein. As part of the deal for signing on with Eisenhower as secretary of state, John Foster Dulles insisted that his brother be given the CIA.

The golden age of the CIA had begun. Dulles staffed the agency almost exclusively with Ivy League graduates; it was not unheard of for operatives to break into the Whiffenpoof song after a successful exploit. "In Allen's circle and through all the Eastern establishment," Grose writes, "working for the CIA was the highest public service imaginable, far more inviting than the hide-bound State Department or the crusty Pentagon." The CIA could get things done. Not only did Dulles enjoy the backing of the secretary of state, he also enjoyed the full confidence, at least initially, of Eisenhower. As a military man, Eisenhower was well-aware of the benefits that could accrue from reliable intelligence, and above all covert action fit in with his desire to avoid massive military outlays.

Smith predicted disaster, but a string of successes seemed to suggest that Dulles and the CIA had a magic touch. In "Operation Ajax" in Iran, his operative Kermit Roosevelt deposed Mohammed Mossadegh, who had nationalized the holdings of the Anglo-American oil company, and reinstalled the Shah. "Operation Success" followed Ajax. Alarmed by a Council on Foreign Relations report stating that Jacobo Arbenz, the leader of Guatemala, was running a "Russian-controlled dictatorship," Dulles immediately launched a program of psychological and paramilitary pressure to force out Arbenz. "Go to

it, my boy, you've got the green light!" Dulles instructed chief operative Albert Haney.

Always an astute promoter of the CIA, Dulles never directly claimed credit for these operations, but he dropped enough hints to journalists to fortify his legend. He was also adept at cultivating relations around the globe: he regularly received foreign dignitaries and constructed his office with several doors of access and separate waiting rooms, so that self-important visitors would not be reduced to the indignity of waiting with other callers. By the mid-1950s, Khrushchev regularly singled out Dulles for condemnation as the mastermind of the West.

For all Dulles's wizardry, there were more near-scrapes than he cared to admit. The Iran operation was a one-off affair; had the army not stood solidly behind the Shah, the coup would have been a debacle. The restoration of the Shah in 1953 also set the pattern of intervening in non-Communist countries to prop up murderous right-wing regimes. These measures usually backfired, leading to popular pressures that resulted in virulently anti-American regimes. Nor did Guatemala proceed as smoothly as Dulles pretended. The truth is that only Eisenhower's willingness to bomb the Guatemalan capital bailed out the motley rebel force backed by Dulles.

Above all, there were Dulles's efforts to penetrate Eastern Europe. No area was of more consuming interest to Dulles. Under the leadership of his protégé James Angleton, the CIA funded a variety of fascist émigrés and ideological free-booters in the hopes of liberating the captive nations. But there was no rollback. The failure of the CIA to assist the June 17, 1953, uprising in East Berlin or the 1956 Hungarian Revolution exposed John Foster Dulles's talk of a "freedom program" that would lead to "separation from Moscow" as so much useless bombast.

Despite these setbacks, Eisenhower made only a few halfhearted stabs at supervising Dulles. In 1954, responding to General James H. Doolittle, who headed a commission that took Dulles to task for his lackadaisical supervision of the agency, Eisenhower declared that "it probably takes a strange kind of genius to run [the CIA]. . . . I'm not going to be able to change Allen." But so strange was this genius that in 1956 Eisenhower felt compelled to ask Robert Lovett and David Bruce to have another look. Arthur Schlesinger Jr., who enjoys unrestricted access to the Robert F. Kennedy papers, supplied Grose with

damning excerpts contained in the archive from the still tightly classified report. In passages that have come to possess a familiar ring, Bruce and Lovett were unsparing: Dulles's protégés were "politically immature," they were "bright, highly graded young men who must be doing something all the time to justify their reason for being."

John Foster Dulles died in 1959, and Allen Dulles began to stumble. Dulles had always been subservient to his older brother, but Foster had reinforced his anticommunism. Now his judgment began to fail. The first sign came with the U-2 scandal in 1959. Dulles had coldly assumed that any pilot would be dead before he hit the ground, but Francis Gary Powers managed to bail out. The resulting brouhaha wrecked Eisenhower's planned Paris summit with Khrushchev and handed the Soviets a major propaganda victory.

But even with a Democratic victory in 1960, Dulles's career as the nation's senior intelligence officer was not over. Bent on retaining Dulles to forestall Republican attacks, Kennedy reappointed him. He soon became aware of the difficulties of working with him. "Dulles is a legendary figure," he declared, "and it's hard to operate with legendary figures." With the Bay of Pigs fiasco, however, Dulles's government service came to an end. When the CIA-sponsored invasion was launched on April 17, 1961, Dulles was off playing golf with business cronies. He had assumed that Kennedy, like Eisenhower in Guatemala, would back him up with American bombers. "Surprisingly, Allen had provided no guiding hand through that week of crisis," writes Grose, "he hovered between helplessness and irrelevance." It was more than surprising; it was time to go.

Apart from serving on the Warren Commission and providing endless fodder for conspiracy theorists by suppressing any trails leading to the CIA, Dulles pattered around his Georgetown home writing two books on what he termed the "trecraft of intelligence." To the end, he attempted to allay Americans' unease with the existence of a permanent spy agency. Perhaps it was a way of justifying his own path. His career had paralleled the rise of the United States, beginning with the halcyon days of Versailles, waning as the United States retreated into isolationism, reviving in World War II and flourishing during the most frigid years of the cold war.

For Grose the mystery of Dulles rests in the ease with which he reconciled skullduggery with rectitude. He suggests that the covert activities championed by Dulles subverted the very ideals he pur-

ported to protect. But Dulles's zeal to battle communism was not misplaced. He was combating a revolutionary power rather than a traditional great power. He correctly diagnosed the Soviet Union as an implacable enemy of the United States bent on world domination. What is more, the rules of the game were far murkier abroad than at home. It was Dulles's hero Woodrow Wilson, after all, who simultaneously advocated allowing Russia to pursue its destiny and secretly sent American troops to Siberia to fight the Bolsheviks. Hypocrisy, you might say, is not foreign to American diplomacy. With his duplicity Dulles did not contravene American principles, he confirmed them.

The real problem, then, is not the righteousness of the CIA. It is the efficacy of the CIA, the instrument that Dulles constructed as the first line of defense against the Soviet threat. Despite the myth that the CIA has lost its role with the end of the cold war, there is little evidence that the CIA ever fulfilled it. Dulles's most glaring deficiency in that struggle was that he was often off on a frolic of his own, presiding over rather than running the CIA.

As the title of Grose's book suggests, the Anglophile Dulles was in part a throwback to the gentleman-amateur agents of Edwardian Britain. "To anyone who is tired of life," wrote Sir Robert Baden-Powell, "the thrilling life of a spy should be the very finest recuperator." For Dulles, intelligence offered an escape from human commitments into a world of crisis and intrigue. The swashbuckling spirit with which Dulles imbued the CIA lingers on until this day, and it should sound a cautionary note about letting a cozy, self-satisfied elite run foreign policy in a democracy. The members of the CIA stumbling around the Langley compound resemble the Keystone Kops more than a potential "American Gestapo." As the Aldrich Ames case suggests, the only thing that CIA successfully subverted at home was itself. American democracy has survived its successes and its failures. But if the "company," as it is known, were a publicly held one, it would be in receivership.

Nothing would have been more painful for Dulles than the current collapse of the CIA. He attempted to place the agency on a permanent footing by building a massive complex for it in Langley, Virginia. Today the CIA seems as decrepit as Dulles at the end of his life. On the day that a dying Dulles was rushed to the hospital on Christmas Eve, 1968, his own house

literally fell apart. His wife, who had forgotten to turn off the hot water faucet, returned to find that water had flooded the bathroom, overloaded the plaster walls and floors, and brought the ceilings crumbling down. Now it is the turn of the house that Dulles built to crumble into musty fragments.

Workmen may have cleaned up the mess in Georgetown, but the mess across the river is probably beyond repair.

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Don't Cry for Me, Alexandria

BY MARC ROBINSON

Out of Egypt: A Memoir by André Aciman

(Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 340 pp., \$20)

"An exiled writer is in the first place a man or woman who is exiled," Julio Cortázar once wrote from his own exile in Paris. He or she is

someone who has been stripped of everything—many times a family and at the very least a way of life, the smell of the air and the color of the sky, the familiarity of the home and the street, of libraries and dogs, of cafés with friends and newspapers and music and walks through the city

—everything, in short, left out of the sociology of exile.

André Aciman teaches a similar lesson by example. The past recaptured in his elegant memoir is full of cucumber lotion and Schubert melodies, Parmesan cheese and the clatter of backgammon chips—all the smells and the sounds of an Alexandria that he knew before moving to Europe and eventually settling in New York. He and his family left Egypt in 1965, just before Aciman turned 14, and just after post-Suez nationalists seized his father's businesses. In his book Aciman calculates the damage done and registers the meaning of his loss. And his fidelity to the senses saves him from an undue indulgence in metaphysics.

As he chronicles his childhood, Aciman has no need to remark upon the significance of time passing, for it emerges in everyday activities. The evolution of the family's use of cloves is representative: their perfume first heralds the cook's beloved spice cakes, and years later the same smell denotes that his aging aunts are using them to soothe their gums. Motifs recur with an equally light touch. Aciman can suggest his father's anxiety about social status simply by noting his hatred of *hilba*, the

distinctly Arab scent that permeates his clothing. (He thinks that "the more Westernized a family, the more odorless its home.") Exile itself is known as an odor before being understood as fate: *abatloir*, the family term for the smell of leather suitcases, begins to pervade the household weeks before they leave, as servants prepare for the inevitable, careful to hide their packing from the young Aciman.

Aciman's way of breathing in the past and his generous, exact descriptions of the tangible world expand his scope. At the outset, *Out of Egypt* promises to be simply a book of vignettes and character sketches—a distinguished personal history in an overcrowded field. Before long, though, it is also a book about the difficult work of memory itself. At several points Aciman's narrative of the 1950s and '60s lurches ahead twenty years, as he visits still-living relatives to research his book, measuring his remembered images of an aunt or an uncle against the real person. Some relatives encourage his curiosity, answering his questions about the past; others dissemble, speaking in code or jokes. In these interviews, Aciman's hidden subject surfaces: it is himself—not simply as writer, but as son, nephew, grandson, grandnephew and great-grandson. Even when his child-self stays in the background, Aciman is marking his place in his family as he writes. Exile throws into relief the family's true shape, letting him see it whole just before it unravels.

The family itself, he discovers, has contributed to that unravelling—snipping its stitchery every time that it surrendered to prejudices and rivalries, even as it acknowledged the larger threat from outside. In 1905 Aciman's great-grandparents emigrated from Constantinople to Alexan-

dria, where their children eventually became prosperous businessmen. But Aciman grew up believing himself neither Turkish nor Egyptian. Contemptuous of the Arabs, part of his large family discovered, or possibly invented, roots in Italy; others cultivated French pretensions. The entire family, in addition, succumbed to Anglophilia. But so haphazard a search for a distinguished Western heritage only underscored what the family wanted most to ignore: its Jewishness.

During the sixty years that it lived in Alexandria, before the nationalists forced them to leave, Aciman's Sephardic family exerted itself in an elaborate round of denial and imposture. "It's because of Jews like you," one uncle said to whomever crossed him, "that they hate Jews like us." Another uncle once disarmed his racist muggers with a challenge: "Do I look Jewish? Go look for your dirty Jews elsewhere." Both men envied the successful transformation of their closest friend and mentor Hugo Blumberg (originally from Romania) into Ugo da Montefeltro. For the members of this family, the threat of exile meant a particular kind of disaster: not so much the standard trauma of uprooting, but the humiliation of being defined by others (as Jewish, as enemies of the state) after years of trying to define themselves. At the moment of departure, they had to acknowledge that they couldn't really claim to be Italian or French, despite their elaborate family trees, and that their Englishness was a fantasy. "Poor Jews," a priest said on hearing that Aciman's father wanted to become Greek Orthodox, in a last-ditch effort to avoid expulsion. "You're citizens nowhere and traitors everywhere, even to yourselves."

The family feels the strain of living between worlds every time its members speak. They must choose among six languages, only one of which, Ladino, a Levantine dialect, comes naturally. But with that fluency comes a reminder of loss:

Ladino spoke of their homesickness for Constantinople. To them, it was a language of loosened neckties, unbuttoned shirts and overused slippers, a language as intimate, as natural and as necessary as the odor of one's sheets, of one's closets, of one's cooking. They returned to it after speaking French, with the gratified relief of left-handed people who, once in private, are no longer forced to do things with their right. All had studied and knew French exceedingly well ... gliding through the imperfect subjunctive with the unruffled ease of those who never err when it comes to grammar because, despite all their efforts, they will never be native speakers.

For Aciman himself, the blurring of identities is particularly disorienting. He was born too late to experience his elders' culture firsthand, and so forever walks on unstable ground. There is little tradition with which to steady himself as he matures. The multiethnic composition of Alexandria—Arab, Greek, French, German, English—only adds to the confusion. His Uncle Isaac once asks Aciman what he wants to be when he grows up. When the boy announces that he wants to be an ambassador, the uncle replies, "Of which country?"

The only place where Aciman feels settled is the family apartment, and it is as a portrait of a home that his book is most memorable. A fleet of great-aunts and uncles surrounds him, and with their doting and disciplining try to protect him from unpredictable circumstance. The attention, for all its constancy, is rarely pure. Grandmother Adèle is a virtuoso of "hostile selflessness." Her voice is a "savage caress." He envies those boys whose parents say "I love you" "as though it were a compliment, not a claim." The varying intensities of this attention enable the reader to gauge the depth of each character's insecurity. Those relatives most distressed by their ethnicity seize upon the boy as a blank slate—the most promising site for their own reinvention. Aciman's father, for instance, insists the boy attend a school that abides by the British model. Others are more generous: when Aciman's Arab teachers force him to memorize anti-Semitic poetry, and later beat him, his mother pulls him out of school.

Within the safety of the household, the adults examine themselves as ruthlessly as they examine Aciman—hoping, perhaps, that their obsessiveness will secure their future. Every new friendship, business partnership and especially marriage is subjected to intense scrutiny, for each allegiance will alter the family's identity. "Are we or aren't we?" asks Uncle Vili whenever he wants definitively to close an argument. The subject of his question varies: Are we not aristocratic, or chosen, or brave, or honorable? Each member of the family answers silently, and continues the self-interrogation on his or her own. People this full of shame might be expected to recoil from such questions. But Aciman's relatives stare and stare into the mirror, never finding what they want, often not even sure what they're looking for. They are cursed with ambivalence, which is a fate worse than shame: on Passover they host a Seder as elaborate as their efforts, every other day of the year, to deny their origins.

If *Out of Egypt* were only this—an

unbroken tale of resentment—it would be excruciating to read. But it is Aciman's book, not his family's, and so it honors his own experience, which is more a matter of elation than anxiety:

I felt the nap of my sweater rub against my chin, there was something warm, wholesome and kind in this soft, autumnal smell of new wool that presaged long tearoom evenings, holiday shopping and Christmas presents. I let the wool rub my chin again, thinking of tarts and hot chocolate at Délices, Alexandria's largest pastry shop, where Aunt Flora was to meet us that evening, and my father a while later, and where we would huddle together under the muted orange spill of evening lights at our usual table overlooking the old harbor while waiters delivered family orders on very large platters.

Not that he denies the claustrophobia when it's there: by living to 106, Aciman's great-grandmother manages to keep even her septuagenarian sons and daughters in a childlike state of deference and fear. And Aciman acknowledges that the family's inwardness doesn't guarantee intimacy. "We always left our doors ajar," recalls Flora of Aciman's father, "but we never let each other in." Still, for all its honesty, *Out of Egypt* is also magical and strangely reassuring. For Aciman does justice to the opposite side of scrutiny, which is guidance—his search for, and his grateful receipt of, models of behavior.

Aciman peppers his book with scenes in which he is the object of impromptu gift-giving and catechism. Uncle Nessim gives him Chesterfield's *Letters to His Son*, a reliable source of advice that he can't obtain from his own family. Grandmother Esther buys him his first ties, and with them eases him into manhood. Uncle Vili teaches him sunbathing etiquette. His father takes him on loose rambles around town as he pays courtesy calls: they rarely speak to one another, but by sharing the journey they discover their mutual dependence. Many of these scenes are of marginal importance to everyone except Aciman, but they are the most moving aspects of his memoir—moving because, in a family prone to melodrama, they designate oases of stillness. Family nervousness about social position, economic well-being, or religious invisibility recedes. Relatives offer guidance for the sake of guidance; their attention derives from spontaneous affection and genuine concern instead of self-interest.

These small gestures create the most durable attachments, and Aciman is eager to commemorate them. He practices a particular kind of hug that he uses on his favorite relatives, squeezing

them until they loosen, laugh and hug him back. On some evenings, Aciman stands in his family's living room and stares at the windows—not out to the big city, object of most children's fantasies, but inward, at his own reflection, taking stock of who he is becoming and how he fits into this world.

The Suez Crisis becomes an opportunity for Aciman to consolidate the gains made in all prior acts of fellowship. The air raids bring all the aunts and uncles together in one apartment, where they sleep shoulder to shoulder on the floor and eat vast meals improvised from hoarded food: "It was good to look and be looked at." Blackout procedure seems to give Aciman the illusion that such family feeling can be contained and made permanent. Curfew seals the house, after all, and nothing distracting seeps through windows painted cobalt blue. From time to time someone turns on the radio for news, and as they gather around the sound everyone is finally focused on the same thing.

Sentimental? No. A clear-eyed (and dry-eyed) detachment freshens Aciman's prose. He is fond but not wistful, just as he is penetrating but not cold. Elegies move with purpose and they end before turning indulgent. Aciman writes less as one for whom all research has confirmed his original premise than as one for whom much is still inchoate. In fact, his conclusions are surprising. Unlike many exiles, Aciman's loneliness for a lost home has little to do with homeland. Only once, briefly in the last pages, almost as an afterthought, does he declare his love for Alexandria. And even though he lingers over the rare periods when the family feels itself to be a family, he doesn't give the diaspora of his family a tragic stature. "As Jews," Flora reminds him, "we know we'll lose everything we own at least twice in our lives."

In a book such as this one, the question of style isn't merely aesthetic. Aciman is always negotiating between the truth-telling demands of the memoir form and the allure of fiction, and he refuses to choose one over the other. He dares us to question the accuracy of his memory by filling many childhood scenes with fully rendered dialogue and precise descriptions of relatives' movements and dress—presumably embellishments on remembered fragments. But at the same time he is careful to maintain the child's point of view: when a door closes on him, the story looks elsewhere for diversion.

In this tension between history and fiction may be found this writer's troubled relationship to memory. Fiction promises mastery over experience, a self

contained world and a central place for the narrator—everything that Aciman hopes for and everything that he can never have. His aunt once told him that in exile “I know myself the way I might know my neighbor—from across the street.” Aciman wishes that he could say the same about himself. For his aunt, such alienation is painful. For Aciman, it offers an extraordinary opportunity. If

he could turn himself into a literary character, he could see himself with his own eyes and, at least as a creation of language, stay in one place.

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The Master of Voices

BY ROBERT BOYERS

Like Most Revelations by Richard Howard

(Pantheon, 112 pp., \$20)

To many of his contemporaries, Richard Howard has seemed at once the most resourceful and the most mandarin of poets, alternately compelling and forbidding, arch and confiding. His work has inspired Harold Bloom and others to describe him as “the Robert Browning of our century,” and his latest book, his tenth, contains several brilliant poems that belong with the best that he has done. Long associated with the form of the dramatic monologue, Howard also has produced a variety of “two-part inventions” told in the voices of figures as diverse as Edith Wharton and August Rodin, Walt Whitman and Oscar Wilde.

Typically, the poems imagine or reinvent the past, focusing on the twilight memories of Mrs. William Morris, the reflections and letters—fevered or melancholy—of Proust or Ruskin, the divagations of Toulouse-Lautrec or Giovanni Bellini. Gossip and anecdote play a large part in this work, which reads now like inspired ventriloquism, now like terse or playful reverie enacting the conflicts of identity. Even where the poems are written in what we take to be the first-person voice of the poet, we are apt to hear a range of voices, swelling, complicating and informing the music. As the critic R.P. Blackmur said of Ezra Pound, Howard’s task has been “to make *personae*, to become himself . . . a person through which what has most interested him in life and letters might be given voice.”

That there are dangers in such an enterprise no one will deny. Amused and absorbed as we may be by the surface articulations and discriminations of personality, by the turns and the surprises of witty anecdote, we may feel—as

Blackmur said of Pound—that we are offered neither an “extraordinary revelation of life, nor any bottomless fund of feeling.” Moved by the wit and the cunning insinuations of Howard’s language, we may feel that the poems are unduly pleased with their own recourses and devices. Tempted by the abundant tokens of worldliness, we may nonetheless suspect that, for Howard, everything exists in the Palace of Art, that reality itself not a matter of truth discovered but of opportunity seized. Howard may speak, in poem after poem, of significance, of bringing together “the accidental and the inevitable,” of distinguishing “fact” from “hallucination,” “evasion” from “intimacy.” He is, all the same, too often thought to be a merely clever gamesman, his racy contemplativeness a mode of openness chiefly geared to display, to revelations not of meaning but of line and color. A poet of color and substance, of line and idea, too often Howard has been misread as a poet exclusively committed to surfaces.

Browning was misread in much the same way, and by no less a reader than Santayana, who saw in him the poetry of “barbarism.” “Our poets are things of shreds and patches,” he wrote, “they give us episodes and studies, a sketch of this curiosity, a glimpse of that romance; they have no total vision, no grasp of the whole reality, and consequently no capacity for a sane and steady idealization.” Turning to the past, these poets are said to treat it “as a dead object, as a ruin.” Browning especially was scorned by Santayana for his vehemence, and for his reduction of the passions to “so many ‘barbaric yawps,’ complex indeed in their conditions, puffs of an intricate

engine, but aimless.” Acknowledging the poet’s capacity to engage his readers, Santayana objected to the “‘realism’ of the personages, who, quite like men and women in actual life, are always displaying traits of character and never attaining character as a whole.”

Howard’s poems are susceptible to the same misapprehension and censure. To admire them is to note, precisely, the “realism” of the personages, the complex conditions in which they revolve, the amusing, occasionally “superior” contemplation of curiosities, the rapidity and sketchiness of the treatment—even in a long poem—the resistance to anything resembling a “steady idealization.” If Browning’s poems may be said to be “little torsos made broken so as to stimulate the reader to the restoration of their missing legs and arms,” so may Howard’s, whose work is similarly admirable for its “pregnancy of phrase, vividness of passion and sentiment, heaped up scraps of observation, occasional flashes of light.” If, when he is not at his best, Howard is, like Browning, “obscure, affected and grotesque,” he is—like his predecessor—most often solicitous, miscellaneously tolerant and appreciative, at all costs interesting.

A slight poem in *Untitled Subjects* (1969)—slight by the scale and the ambition of several others in that remarkable book—is “1864,” spoken, says Howard, “probably” by the novelist Thackeray. A poem largely about a failed marriage, it opens with a patent curiosity, a black “Sepoy servant” called Nate, “The natural son / of my Calcutta Stepfather,” who offers an eccentric observation on the excited Buonaparte, pacing in a Garden and eating “three pigs in a day . . . / and all the children he can lay hands on too.” Neither Nate nor Buonaparte will figure in the poem beyond the opening three stanzas, where they dominate. But they confer upon the poem an air of narrative excitement and variousness, an expectation of color and anecdote. And they permit the speaker to say, with a certain poignancy of derivation, “thirty years hence, to the day [when Buonaparte was sighted], I wrote the first / ‘novel without a hero.’” The lead-in is, as you like it, inspired or unduly miscellaneous. So, too, the passing criticisms from a childhood letter to “Mother,” creating the sense that an entire life is in process of being caught, summarized, suggestively outlined, without much in the way of elaborated substance.

But by the time Howard’s speaker comes out with “marriage / is like dipping into a pitcher of snakes / For the chance of an eel,” we are so utterly enchanted that the peripheral or introductory

material—inspired or merely clever—seems hardly crucial, and we are prepared to follow out the curve of the poet's sketch with every expectation of illumination. What we take to be grotesque or unnatural assumes the character of an essential insight or gesture, the snakes and the eels in Howard's image as inevitable as any such clinching figure can be in a poem about high anxiety and the failure of a marriage.

As for the idea that such poetry turns the past into a dead object, one need only ask what could be more immediate than an oscillation of consciousness in which Carlyle and Tennyson and Punch and the Duke of Devonshire are casually invoked as familiars, present to us quite as if they were our contemporaries. There is more than sleight of hand in this. The voice that speaks in "1864" is a recognizably authentic nineteenth-century voice in its cadences ("I had not found what I wanted, nor wanted / What I found"), in its details ("fond of cheroots and good claret"), in its class consciousness ("A novelist was, she knew, beneath her"), in its wayward vehemences ("Show me the Bluebeard Closet where the dead wives / Hang, and the murdered secrets").

But it is not only the simulation that we admire. The past is alive for us, too, in the confidence with which the fictive voice is appropriated, without any trace of the finickiness or the unease that often hobbles such transactions. Howard's gift includes a full investment in the past, in a multiplicity of voices, so that it seems never to contrive what must always be

an impeccably artificial discourse. Indeed, nothing seems more natural, more felt, than the dictions associated with Howard's speakers, or the witty epigrammatic formulations that are so much a part of their idiom.

Howard has also been much concerned with the past as an irrecoverable other country. In "1915," the final poem of *Untitled Subjects*, he has Mrs. William Morris, in a decidedly elegiac mood, recommending to her daughter the letters and photographs that are all she has left of her life, her husband and such departed friends as Ruskin, Dodgson and Dante Gabriel Rossetti. "Save it all," she instructs her daughter, though "the world grows dim," and in time inevitably one is inclined "to throw away whatever is left." Remembering, stirred as she is by a vagrant line or image, Mrs. Morris also recalls how much more "invention" figures in what we grasp, how much "make believe" shapes our gestures and our feelings. Life itself is here recalled as "a long decay—we die from day to dream." In a letter snatched from the debris, William Morris is said to have written "So one may lie and symbolize until one falls asleep, and that be a symbol as well." The fear, everywhere enacted by Mrs. Morris and by a profusion of other speakers or characters in Howard's poems, is that versions or tokens of the past, however "lifelike," are apt to be "lifeless, wonderful but dead," as Santayana said of Browning.

The more do we wonder, then, that Howard should routinely seek to embody the past, to inhabit and to invent alien voices, while acknowledging the impossibility entailed in his project. In part this may be explained by noting that Howard writes not as a historian, nor as an archaeologist, nor as a collector of exotica, but as a poet committed to the modes of self-exposure. His aim, considered in this way, is not to provide an adequate expression of the past, it is to mount conflicts that can express his own haunted consciousness. Considered in this way, the personae are not ends but means, and the

difference, say, between a dramatic monologue featuring Sir Walter Scott as its speaker and an autobiographical lyric is a difference in strategy rather than a difference in motive. Of course, certain pleasures of appropriation and impersonation are less obviously central to an autobiographical poem about early sexual encounters than to a poem in which the voice of Edith Wharton predominates. But one finds in all of Howard's poems, right up through his latest book, not simply the interplay of identity and dispersal, assertion and loss, but a steady inquisition focused on one fundamental question: How are we to negotiate the relation between what is given and what is made?

That Howard has shown a special dedication to the made is obvious. No poet of comparable stature has been so unguarded in his extravagances, so arch and playful in his deployment of image and insinuation. His new book, in this respect, offers no surprise. One poem, "... Et Dona Ferentes," which brings together Robert Frost and Wallace Stevens, opens with the lines "About offering they were often wrong / headed, these two modern masters"—obviously a play on the famous opening of Auden's "Musée des Beaux Arts." Puns and lexical reflections abound. The key personages are at one point freely translated as "Wallace the Wily, Lord of Qualified Assertions" and "Duke Robert, Dynast / of Dogmatic Doubt." The encounter, imagined, elaborated, largely invented on the basis of very little, is at once celebrated and ridiculed, our poet's "chronicle" self-described as "the Golden Legend and the Leaden too." Whatever the status of the meeting to which the poem is ostensibly committed, the poem is a particularly redolent instance of the impulse to shape, to inflect and to extend and only thereby to discover what is real. In the case we may not have, as Blackmur put it, "a bottomless fund of feeling," but there are dozens of other poems that achieve extravagance and sympathy, the music of the snake charmer and the true voice of feeling.

Howard's 1989 volume *No Traveller*, like his earlier books, works with a wide range of poetic forms while remaining well within the ambit of the poet's characteristic procedures. The largest poem in the book, a thirty-page set of verse epistles titled "Even in Paris," moves with astonishing brio from one accent to another, from the flippant "a bird in the bush is worth / a feather in your cap," to the mordantly ruminative,

the day dies out in one's arms
at this hour, stretching its final light

Noreen

In any group there are the beautiful and
the plain the strong & weak smart as a trinket
& dumb as a clam Agreed But there's little
agreement who they are or correlation
with how they all turn out Noreen here lying

on the storeroom floor with her head on a sack
of potatoes phone dangling from the wall and
a plastic cup of vodka on the shelf was
voted Wittiest in the Class and The Girl
with the Nicest Eyes Where be your gibes now? asked

Hamlet as indeed did Noreen when playing
Hamlet in 9th grade pronouncing it *guybs* while
Miss Endicott rolled her eyes which weren't half
as nice as Noreen's Outside it's been dead cold
and rainy for a month and polluted air

gums your glasses like snails the ink smears on her
lover's letter Dear Noreen For years she has
held the wrong job the wrong man She even had
the wrong child Those are the reasons How much we
need reasons! How reasons make us feel better!

PETER MEINKE

in what would seem a final agony . . .
You've seen cats die like that, haven't you?
Stiffening into darkness without a sound . . .

But the ceaseless narrative momentum of the poem, the relentless display of oddities and conversational brilliances: these enable us to feel that human issues, large and small, are at stake. The trivialities and slynesses do nothing to compromise a vagrant tenderness or the sense that Howard is developing a capacious vision focused on the limits of pleasure and imagination.

No such intimations are present among the bitchy sinuosities of a poem like "Triangulations" or in several other poems in *No Traveller*. Instead, Howard displays performative dexterities that have no share in the sentimental or the transcendental. Would Santayana have found such exercises aimless? If so, he would have missed in them the satire of aimlessness, the exposure of qualities that are at once amusing and appalling. In "Triangulations," more precisely, he would have missed the parody of a love poem in which a failed love is at last put to rest, and the jilted lover has his say. That a certain coarseness is revealed, along with a propensity for erotic aggression and vindictiveness, is all the more symptomatic of the poem's curious ambitions.

At once an indulgence and a celebration of a notoriously mean-spirited homosexual rhetoric, replete with erotic puns and misogynistic confidences, the poem is also a criticism of the way most of us live, and feel, and think about love. No reader of such a poem will suppose, as Santayana might have suggested, that "the impulsive utterances and the crudities of most of the speakers" in Howard's poems of this kind are unequivocally "adopted by the poet as his own." The pointed shallowness of the utterance, the unmistakable crudity of the feeling are such as to distance us, and Howard, from the characters who are studied. The past's intelligence is substantially disabused of the reflexes to which it is nonetheless attracted.

Howard's new book contains no poem precisely of this kind. The nearest it comes is a long monologue called "Visitations," in which a young German woman speaks of her sexual and marital distress and eventually seduces the medical "specialist" to whom she addresses her complaint. The poem is a satire directed at the normalizing practices, and assumptions, of an earlier culture, for which an entire range of proclivities were unnatural and susceptible to therapeutic intervention. What distinguishes such a poem from Howard's more sinister monologues are two related qualities, namely, its obvious

delight in the projection of an alien and exotically inflected voice, and its complete satisfaction in evoking a situation that speaks for itself. If what is spoken may seem no more significant than the formulation "How tonic, reality!", the achieved insight gradually won is that "life affords occasions / when reason will not do to accommodate / the facts." And though the playfully elegant voice here ensures that troubling thoughts be held off, the entailed insight surely lends itself to other possibilities.

In fact, *Like Most Revelations* contains a considerable proportion of elegiac and deeply troubling poems. Several tell of the lives and the deaths of friends taken by AIDS. One assumes the form of a "Recommendation" to Sappho, a letter written on behalf of a "dyke" poet stricken before she had time to effect the "transformation" to which desire might have led her. The long poem that concludes the volume reflects—in alternating voices and in sometimes sickening detail—the career of a "Man Who Beat Up Homosexuals Reported To Have AIDS Virus." One is tempted to remark in the new book a more or less steady emphasis on homosexual issues, on the vicissitudes and consolations of friendship in the age of AIDS; but issues are no more central to Howard in this book than in others, and friendship is celebrated less for its own sake than for the sake of affirmations to which Howard's poems have long been tensely committed. What is affirmed, again and again, is the will to create ourselves, and the will to resist what fate or circumstance would make of us. There is nothing of the call to arms in this, nothing either of the victim lament that often colors the poetry of the marginalized or dispossessed. Howard's poetry is the embodiment of a robustness as inimical to complaint as it is to austerity or renunciation.

Other poems in the new book, more familiar in kind but astonishing in their conversational fluencies and dramatically realized confrontations, enact the consciousness of Pierre Bonnard and Isadora Duncan. A series of three poems on "Culture and its Misapprehensions" offers surprisingly didactic reflections upon the persistent strangeness that is the common life, concluding that the real can only be made credible by "chronicle" and "lie," that "moral consistency" is ever the last fiction we are prepared to be relieved of. Everywhere in the book there is a perfectly realized interaction of manner and sentiment, of formal contingency and moral purpose. Again and again we note the way that the poet submits to his material while remaining in complete control of structure and design.

It is tempting to speak of the new book

as indeed a revelation of new purposes in Howard, of a new determination to speak more often in his own voice, but the fact is that his own voice had come through in a whole range of earlier poems. More important, Howard's first-person voice has always been various, a deliberate enactment of multiple accents and tonalities in which shifts of register and feeling are invariably the rule. Always there has been in Howard's presentation of self a "something more," spoken or hinted at, here taken on, there cast off.

In his transactions with others—close friends, historical personages, stray acquaintances, invented alter egos—Howard has invited confidences, but he has also been preoccupied with "the reef on which intimacy / founders." Acquainted deeply with himself as with others, consulting obsessively his own desire as he inquires continually into the desire of others, he has typically found, in place of identity singular and coherent, multiplicities of voice and instinct. Ever present to us in his poems, with whatever projections and disguises, Howard has been an embodiment of the "promiscuities" that he celebrates, a highly mannered assemblage of proliferations.

The mask in Howard is always a self on the way to its next assignation, and even the elegiac note in the new work inspires recollections of diversity, the very idiom charged with a restless instinct for metamorphosis and subversion. Himself and not himself, Howard is very much at one with his friend "Robert Phelps, Dead At 66," for whom the real is "permanently askew," a strangeness, "endless apprenticeships to other men's disclosures." The "extraordinary revelation of life" that Howard has achieved is the fruit of singularity comprehensively understood, each figure alone and apart, irreducible and symptomatic, eccentric and inevitably a revelation of what is common to all.

Howard's voices, with their unimpeachable accents, reticences and indiscretions, are in the service not only of what Wilde called "the transient gladness of color," but of "the whole sphere of feeling, the perfect cycle of thought," and put us in touch with the volatility of consciousness itself. If the poems reveal, as they must, a reality that is fundamentally unlovely, they do so in a way that instructs and deranges, delights and chastens. No body of work by a contemporary American poet has offered so many alluring torments, has invited a comparably various and eager responsiveness.

ROBERT BOYERS is editor of the quarterly *Salmagundi* and professor of English at Skidmore College.

WASHINGTON DIARIST

King Newt

I'VE FIGURED OUT WHAT'S SO DIFFERENT about Washington in 1995. It's Newt. Pretty obvious, huh? And yet there's more to the Newtization of the political culture of Washington than meets the eye. Newt Gingrich is the most influential non-president since ... well, since as far back as I can remember. Lyndon Johnson was a powerful figure as Senate majority leader in the 1950s—before my time—but even he didn't drive the agenda or dominate the town like Gingrich does. (LBJ didn't teach a college course, either.) Gingrich has snuffed out the storyline in Washington that had endured since Franklin Roosevelt's era, namely the ups and downs of the president. Now the story in Washington is the agony and ecstasy of Gingrich. The media reflects the shift. Until the Republican triumph last November, almost all press coverage in Washington boiled down to one question: How's the president doing? Now the question is: How's Newt doing? President Clinton and congressional Democrats have been reduced to reacting to Gingrich. The White House's primary aim is to attack selected parts of the Contract with America, the ten-point House Republican agenda put together by Gingrich. House Democrats have a one-point Contract with America—nail Newt. He has also altered reading habits in Washington. Books on his reading list for GOP freshmen are suddenly popular, and publishers are eager to take advantage. One Gingrich favorite (and an important book in its own right), *The Tragedy of American Compassion* by Marvin Olasky, is featured in a paperback edition with a new blurb on the front cover, "Recommended by Newt Gingrich." One more thing. Roger Clinton, the president's half brother, has been crowded out by Gingrich's half sister, a lesbian named Candace Gingrich. Her reflected glow is hotter than his.

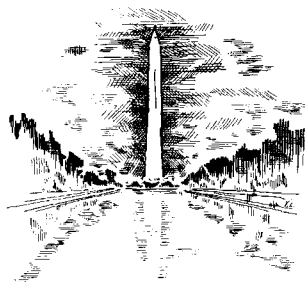
IN NEWT'S WASHINGTON, THE rules of media courtship have changed. For decades, politicians of all stripes sought the approval of *The Washington Post*, *The New York Times*, the national news magazines and the T.V. network news folks. They did so by granting access, dispensing leaks, issuing lunch invitations, etc. Even Ronald Reagan—

or I should say, especially Ronald Reagan—courted the usual press sources. His staff treated *The Washington Post* as the arbiter of how they were doing. Bad coverage meant they were screwing up. Gingrich concludes exactly the opposite. Bad coverage in the mainstream media means he's doing well. He and his allies court a different wing of the media entirely. Gingrich's sidekick, Majority Leader Dick Armey, passed up lunch with the editors of *Post* to be interviewed by the editors of the more conservative *Washington Times*. Gingrich is sure to be more upset by a discouraging word on the editorial page of *The Wall Street Journal* than by a dig in *Newsweek*. And if talk radio happened to zing him, Gingrich would go bonkers. He has invited talk radio hosts to broadcast from the Capitol, and they've accepted. When they go on the air, he invariably drops by to chat. Most days, neither he nor his aides bother to watch the evening news shows.

GINGRICH'S ASCENDANCY HAS PRODUCED an unintended consequence for the Republican presidential race. It's been diminished. Not by Gingrich's decision to stay out of the contest (for now, at any rate), but by the enthusiasm he has generated among Republicans for the GOP Congress. My sense is that Republicans are so excited about what Congress might do, they don't have time to get whipped up about the contest for the 1996 nomination. There's remarkably little passion for any of the presidential candidates now. This is especially true among conservatives, precisely the folks the candidates are wooing most avidly. To the extent conservatives have followed the presidential race, they like Phil Gramm, respect Bob Dole and are intrigued by Lamar Alexander, a moderate who has taken up conservative rhetoric. But the truth of the matter is that few conservatives, or other Republicans, are paying much attention. They probably won't before August, when Newt and Congress take a long recess and the fate of the Contract with America and the future of federal spending are known.

WHILE THE PRESS CONTINUES TO forecast a revolt by Republican moderates, quite the opposite has happened: Gingrich has corralled them. Depending on your definition, there are anywhere from two dozen to five dozen moderates in the House. Yet only two voted against the balanced budget amendment, and

only two (a different two) rejected the regulatory moratorium. The yapped-about coalition of the center—moderate Republicans joining moderate Democrats—hasn't materialized. Gingrich hasn't allowed it. He lovebombs moderates with attention, inviting so many to strategy sessions that conservatives get ticked. But it works. When Gingrich is criticized on gay issues, for instance, Steve Gunderson of Wisconsin, the lone gay Republican in the House, rushes forward to defend him. Only once have moderates crossed Gingrich. Hours before a vote on reviving Star Wars, two

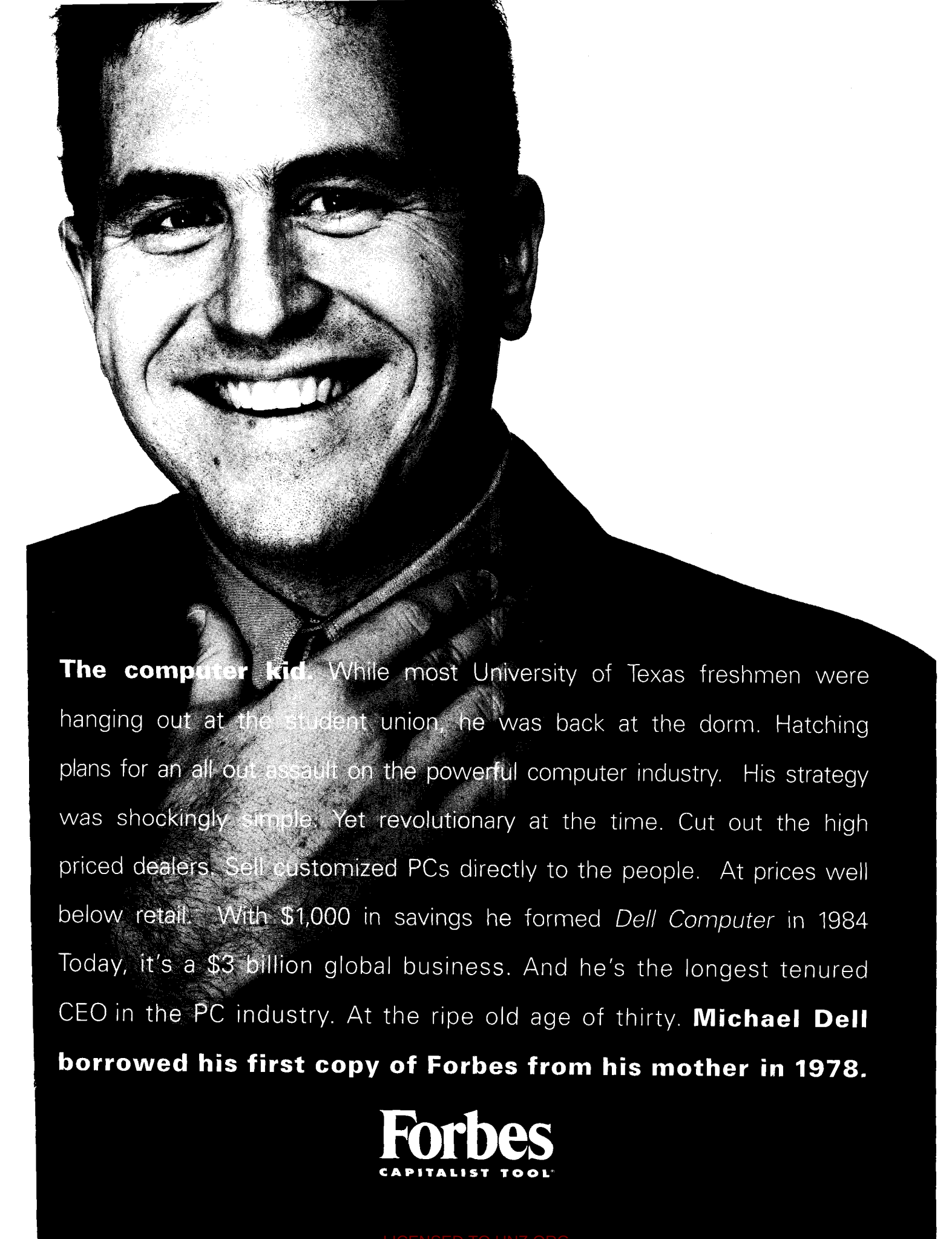


dozen met privately and decided to vote no. They didn't inform Gingrich. Their votes were pivotal as funding for Star Wars lost, and Gingrich was embarrassed. Still, one vote doesn't constitute a revolt. If there is a revolt, it's by moderate Democrats, who more often

than not vote with Gingrich on big issues.

THE ULTIMATE REFLECTION OF Gingrich's power is the way he dominates the Washington mind. Yes, there is such a thing deep inside the Beltway. Gingrich has become the standard of measurement. Everyone is compared with him. Armey, it's agreed, lacks an ego as big as Gingrich's. Armey's office in the Capitol is austere. There are no power pictures—of Armey with, say, Margaret Thatcher or Charlton Heston—on the walls. Bob Dole? He doesn't measure up to Gingrich as a political visionary. He jokes that he'll let his pollsters discover a vision. Strategists? Are there any in Gingrich's league? The only ones mentioned are William Kristol and Representative Bill Paxon of New York, a Newt protégé. Lobbyists? The coin of their realm is closeness to Gingrich. The closest is former Representative Vin Weber of Minnesota, who was Newt's alter ego for a decade. Two of Weber's former staffers are now top Gingrich aides. What about the comparison with Clinton? It's been overworked, notably by me. Gingrich and Clinton are both guys with good memories and the gift of gab. But comparing their poll ratings, now routinely done in Washington, is dumb. National popularity is a significant ingredient in the president's ability to govern. But it hardly affects a House speaker, who faces voters only in his own district. Whipping Congress toward enactment of his agenda won't make Gingrich popular. It does make him king of the Washington mountain.

FRED BARNE



The computer kid. While most University of Texas freshmen were hanging out at the student union, he was back at the dorm. Hatching plans for an all-out assault on the powerful computer industry. His strategy was shockingly simple. Yet revolutionary at the time. Cut out the high priced dealers. Sell customized PCs directly to the people. At prices well below retail. With \$1,000 in savings he formed *Dell Computer* in 1984. Today, it's a \$3 billion global business. And he's the longest tenured CEO in the PC industry. At the ripe old age of thirty. **Michael Dell borrowed his first copy of Forbes from his mother in 1978.**

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